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Ukrainian women clinch gold

Carlsen edges out Kramnik in surreal finish

Garry Kasparov:
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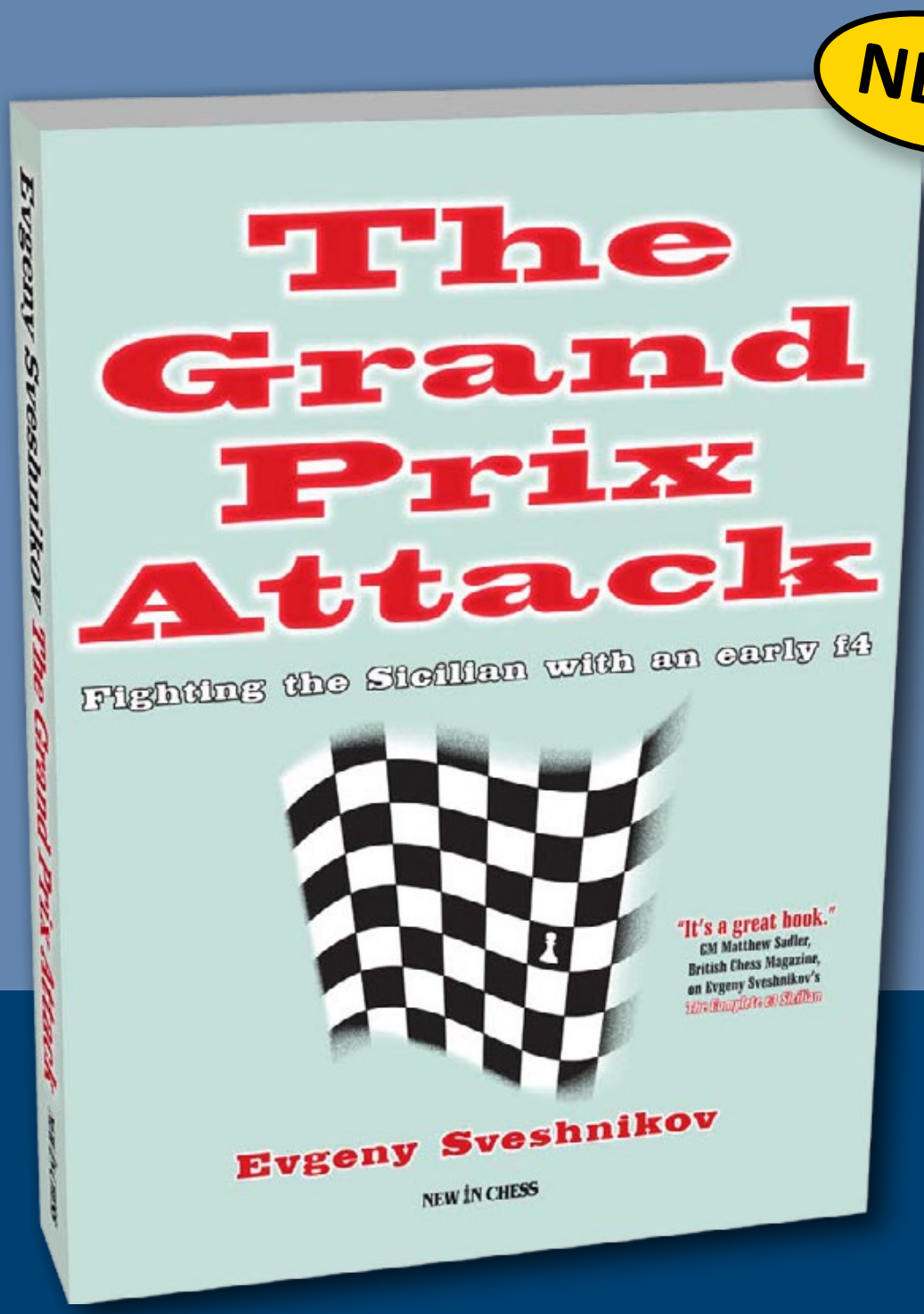
JAN TIMMAN ON SVIDLER'S REPERTOIRE ★ WILLY HENDRIKS ANSWERS CRITICS ★ JUST CHECKING NASTASIA KARLOVICH

Contrary to popular belief (and earlier publications) it is not just about tactics ...



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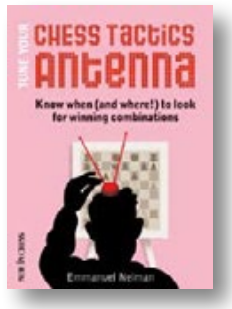

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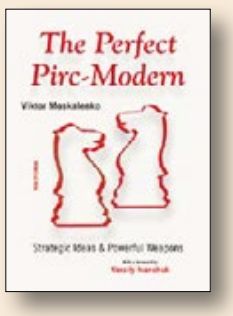

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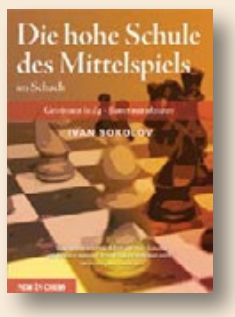

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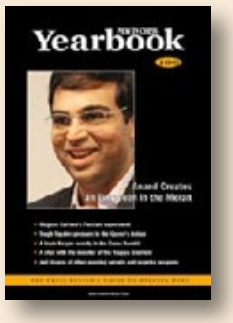

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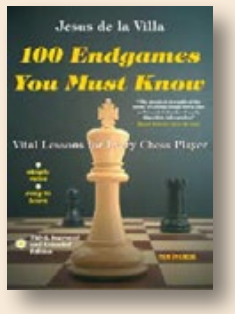

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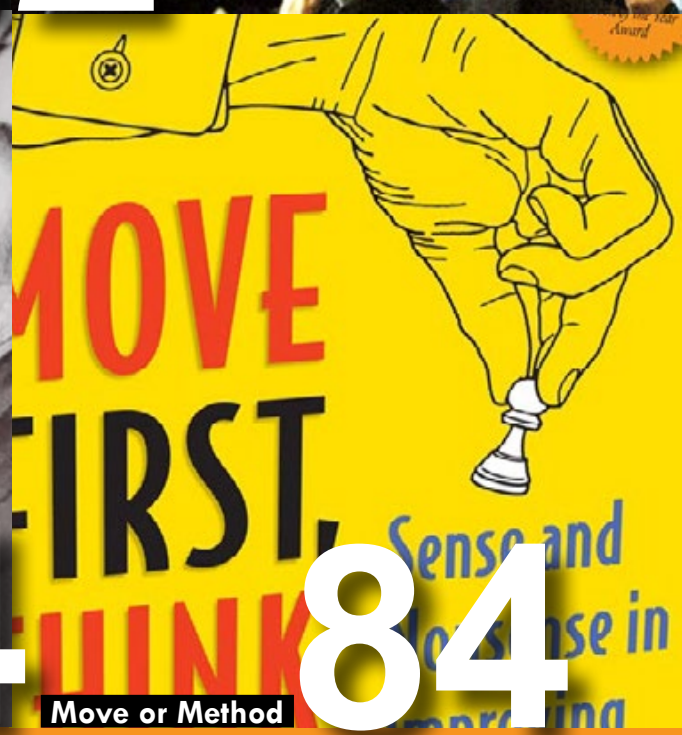

'A big point is that my main goal is not to become World Champion and to prove something to anyone. I have other motives and I think that is the reason why I didn't commit suicide yet (laughs). I also want to show good chess, good spirit, or in the Eastern manner, to show my Zen. If I know that I do my job well that is also satisfactory.' – Vladimir Kramnik

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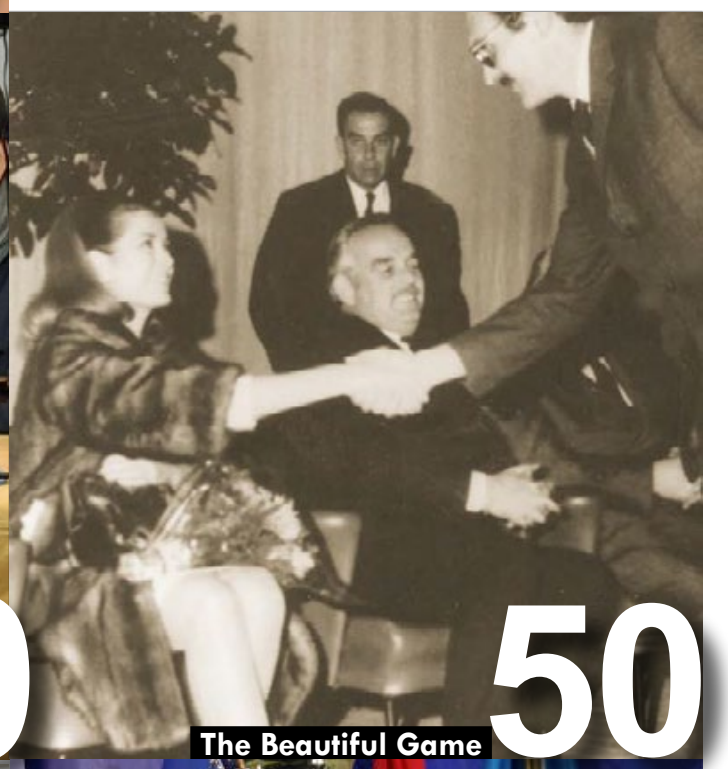

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A new precision

'We are working to ornament, embroider, embellish, to introduce ceremony and the sacred.' Whenever he speaks about his visions to recreate chess, Andrew Paulson never seems lost for high-blown words or lofty thoughts. Here AGON's chief was speaking about the new chess set, 'developed after months of research and consultation', that was used in London and will be used from now on in all major FIDE events. The set was designed by industrial designer Daniel Weil, who 'undertook an exercise in cultural archaeology to look at the traditional meaning and form of the chess sets and their individual pieces in order to refine form and meaning and give the new set a new precision'. While seeking this 'new precision', Weil observed that 'the row of eight major pieces mirrored the eight columns of the west elevation of the Parthenon, and that the pieces before play evoked the structure of a classical building.'

The Championship pieces 'evoking the west elevation of the Parthenon'.

Now you may wonder what he's been smoking, but that's how artists operate when they redefine an object with an eye for even the tiniest detail. For instance, the crown on the king no longer has a cross on top, more some sort of a half-cross, because Weil wanted to make the set 'genuinely pluri-cultural and global'. And, in his eyes, the traditional green felt beneath the pieces was too much an evocation of the Victorian era when chess had become 'a parlour game along with cards, billiards and dice'. Today chess deserves 'its own intellectual construct and consistency' and therefore Weil's pieces glide on black and white felt. And indeed, why not?

NEW IN CHESS

'The weight is good and the look and the feel was fine.'

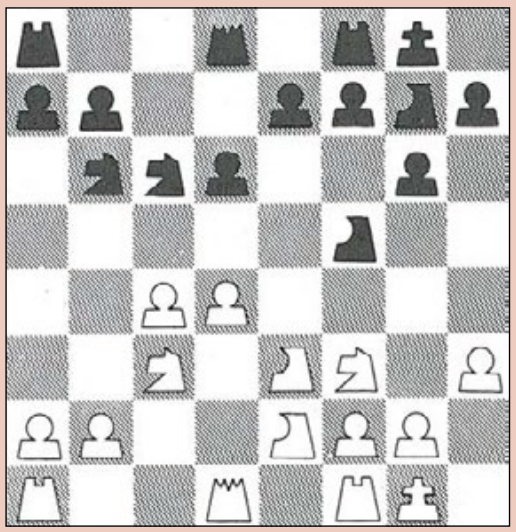
While we felt that the pieces were a tad tall in relation to the size of the squares (and, to be honest, unadventurously wondered what was wrong with the traditional Staunton pieces?), we agreed that the final verdict should come from the players. And they were quite positive! Even traditionalist Boris Gelfand had no objections: 'At first the pieces look strange, but you get used to it.' And Peter Svidler commented: 'I quite like them. They provided us with a set the day before the opening ceremony. They are not so different as to create any kind of confusion. The weight is good and the look and the feel of the pieces in the hand was fine.'

Making the invisible visible

An element of the general overhaul that Andrew Paulson has planned for our game that met with less enthusiasm was the redesigned diagrams on the tournament website. On the 'chess casting' page, visitors could follow the progress of the games, listen to live commentary and view all sorts of statistics (which are supposed to be expanded considerably in the near future). Chess casting is promoted as 'making the invisible visible', but with the futuristic diagrams it was alas very much the other way round. Paulson has admitted that the diagrams need fine-tuning, as the white and red pieces on light-grey and dark-grey squares were hard to read for the colour-blind, but it was not only about the colours. The rooks and queens look so alike that in his white game against Levon Aronian, Boris Gelfand suddenly felt his heart drop when he sat calculating while watching his position on the monitors in the hall,

Chess Casting 2013

which also showed the new diagrams. He briefly thought he was losing material, only to realize much to his relief that he had taken one of Black's rooks for a queen and vice versa.



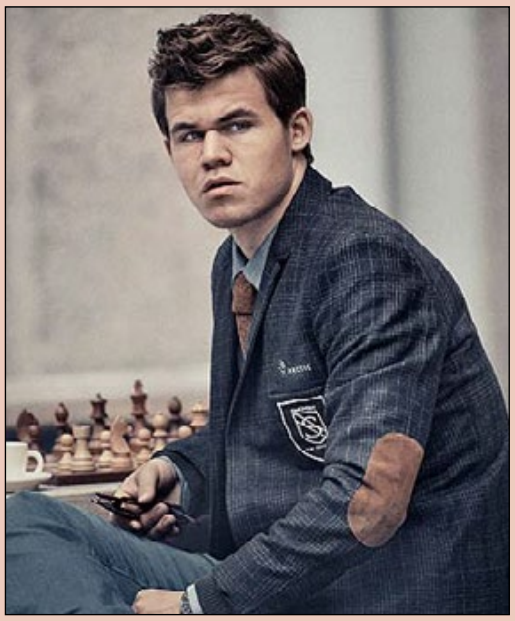
Chess Casting 1975

For older readers who knew our precursor *Schaakbulletin*, the chess casting diagrams may bring back memo-

ries of the revolutionary modernist diagrams that Wim Andriessen introduced in his magazine in the summer of 1975. For several months the diagrams, designed by Andriessen's artistic brother Cees, mainly caused confusion and annoyance, until J.H. Donner displayed his wit to end this nonsense. Annotating a game he included an empty square in his notes and wrote: 'At this point a diagram would have been most useful to study the position closer, but the diagrams in *Schaakbulletin* are illegible anyway due to the obstinate artistic views of the editor.' For the rest of the game 'normal' diagrams were used, as was also the case in the rest of that issue. The revolutionary diagrams were never heard of again.

Hottie check

What do The Voice US frontman Adam Levine, actor Max Irons, model David Gandy, actor Andrew Cooper and Magnus Carlsen have in common? They all appeared in the list of sexiest men of 2013 of the British *Cosmopolitan*! They are ranked first to fifth (alas, in this order) on a list of 23 hunks that are supposed to make



Magnus Carlsen: 4th in the 2013 Cosmopolitan rankings.

the English ladies drool and swoon. As *Cosmopolitan* notes about the 22-year-old Norwegian challenger to the World Championship: 'Check this hottie out! Chess prodigy Magnus Carlsen might just have converted us to the board game.'

Rumour has it that when Carlsen received the good news of his nomination, he avowed that this was the best thing that ever happened to him. Well, you can't blame him!

Skipping as the norm

Now that Magnus Carlsen has successfully drawn his country's attention to the world of chess, the next step to keep the chess boom going seems to be that his compatriots find Norway's

Aryan Tari: who cares about IM norms?

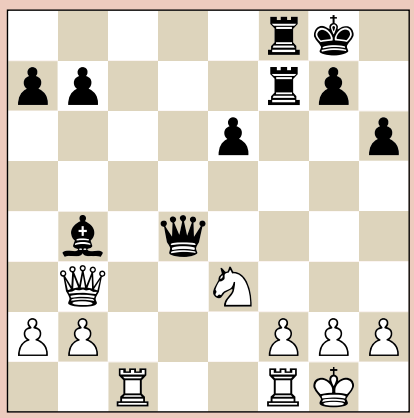
next top grandmaster. And lo and behold! Barely had Carlsen won the right to play for the highest title or he could announce during his last press conferences in London that 13-year-old Aryan Tari had made his first GM norm. Tari did so at the Open Norwegian Championship in Fagernes, where he finished in 7th place, one point behind overall winner Eduardas Rozentalis. With this result he added 51 points to his current rating of 2293.

Aryan Tari, whose parents originate from Iran, is seen as Norway's greatest talent since Magnus Carlsen, and just like his example he doesn't seem to be terribly interested in making his norms in the right order. Before this GM norm he didn't collect any IM norms.

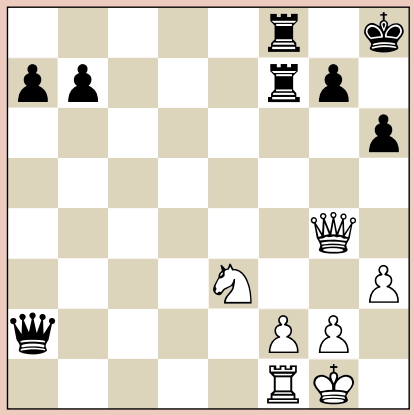
Tari's biggest scalp in Fagernes was none other than Jon-Ludvig Hammer, Norway's second-highest rated player at 2631, and a participant in the forthcoming Norway Chess super-tournament.

NI 27.5 – D38
Jon Ludvig Hammer
Aryan Tari
Fagernes 2013 (3)

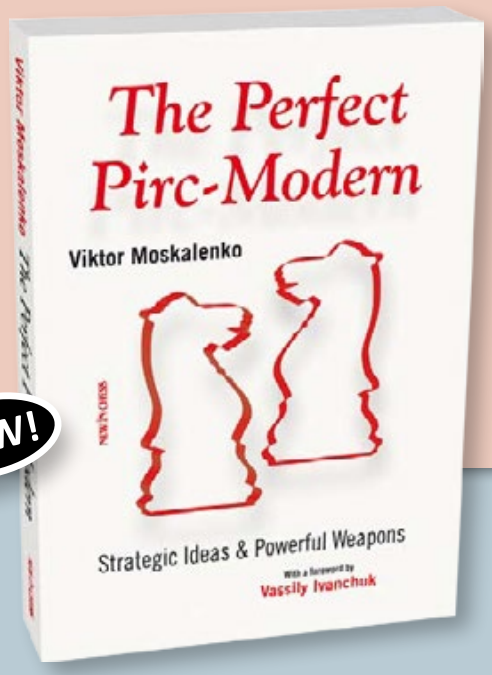
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗xf6 ♕xf6 7.♕a4+ ♘c6 8.e3 0-0 9.♗e2 ♗d7 10.♖c1 ♕e7 11.♕c2 dxc4 12.♗xc4 e5 Considering the 300+ rating gap, Black has equalized easily. **13.0-0 exd4 14.♘d5 ♕d6 15.exd4 ♗e6 16.♘e3 ♘xd4** The exchanges are fine for Black. **17.♘xd4 ♕xd4 18.♗xe6 fxe6 19.♕xc7 ♖f7 20.♕c2 ♖af8** Black has pleasant play with the doubled rooks on the f-file. Perhaps this was the moment for White to be modest and play it safe with 21.♕c4 and exchange queens. **21.♕b3**



Ambitious but asking for trouble. **21...♗d2! 22.♕xe6** Hammer was understandably not attracted to the lacklustre 22.♖cd1 ♖xf2 23.♖xf2 ♕xe3 24.♕xe3 ♗xe3, and having said A... **22...♗xc1 23.♖xc1 ♕xb2** But the problem is that there is no real B... **24.♖f1 ♕e2 25.h3 ♔h8 26.♕g4 ♕xa2**



Black is winning hands down, and did so after 49 moves.



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Being there

The April issue of *Chess Life* took us back to the Sao Paulo/Bilbao Grand Slam Final. On the 'Letters to the Editor' page Bruce Radford points out that the description of *CL* reporter Ian Rogers of the short last-round game between Paco Vallejo and Fabiano Caruana differed considerably from the account in New In Chess 2012/8. Mr. Radford rightly wonders which version is true. Whereas Ian Rogers saw the brief draw as a 'chivalrous' gesture from Caruana, who apparently wanted to spare Vallejo further misery, we described Caruana's shock and disappointment after Vallejo's opening choice, a well-known drawing mechanism in the Ruy Lopez, had robbed him of the chance to play for outright tournament victory.

In his reaction, Ian Rogers reveals that he was 'rather stunned' by this description, qualifying the words in New In Chess as 'spin' and 'ridiculous'. This is remarkable. In his wish to stick to his original version Rogers shows little interest in what really happened and doesn't shrink back from misleading the reader.

NEW IN CHESS

As Paco Vallejo tells his story, a disappointed Fabiano Caruana is lost in thought.

So, what happened? At the start of the last round in Bilbao, Magnus Carlsen and Fabiano Caruana were tied for first. In that last round Carlsen faced Levon Aronian. As Caruana told us, he was 'pretty sure that Magnus would not be able to beat Aronian with black.' Caruana himself also had black, but he played Vallejo, who was in bottom place and off form. How can a grandmaster with Rogers' experience think or suggest that a renowned fighter like Caruana decided not to play for a win in this situation? And how can he say that Caruana could have avoided the repetition 'at many moments'? As Caruana told us: 'I felt like winning would just give me the tournament.' Together with his trainer Chuchelov, he had looked at various openings, but they had not considered the possibility that Vallejo would go for this forced draw. Caruana said he felt frustrated and disappointed. Regarding the move repetition he said: 'I can avoid it, but then I am just worse.'

You may wonder why Ian Rogers didn't substantiate his version with quotes from Caruana? One reason is: because he was not present in Bilbao. That's right. Nevertheless, he had no qualms about ridiculing the story of a reporter who was an eye-witness to what happened. It gets even more painful when he uses this 'example' as a stepping-stone to judge the journalism of New In Chess in general.

The fact that he was not present in Bilbao only partly accounts for Rogers' misguided speculations and distortions of the truth. After all he might have contacted Caruana or us to hear what had really happened. What's baffling to begin with is that a grandmaster, present in Bilbao or not, can think or suggest that Fabiano Caruana, famous for his fighting spirit, would allow a 'depressed' opponent a short draw and thus forego his chance to score what would have been the greatest triumph of his young career. ■

Pillsbury married a Bush

In 1900 H.N. Pillsbury married Mary Bush, daughter of Judge Prescott Bush of New York State. Since the unusual name Prescott was also the name of the grandfather of President George W. Bush, no doubt a family tradition, I call Mrs. Pillsbury an (indirect) ancestor of presidents.

Did this relationship prompt the issuance of the first U.S. chess postal stamp? No! Central African countries put us to shame in this regard.

As early as four years before, the private life of this genius started to impact chess history. At half-way he led the St. Petersburg 1895-96 quadrangular tournament, having twice defeated Em. Lasker. But then he collapsed with five straight losses. It has been surmised that what upset his concentration was the first sign of the then-incurable and sometimes fatal disease, syphilis, to which Hilbert & Urcan refer in New In Chess 2013/2, which would destroy his brain and claim his life a decade later, at only 33.

Anthony Saidy
Los Angeles, USA

Ceterum censeo

My reply to Borislav Ivkov's letter to the editor in New In Chess 2013/2, a reaction to the article I wrote about him in issue 2012/8, is certainly not going to be as lengthy as Ivkov's litany of half-truths. I did paint a very good picture of GM Ivkov (and was certainly not playing a gambit!), bringing out his accomplishments, respecting his achievements..., but only not willing to concur on his grandeur as he wishes to paint it (that's apparently his problem, and my 'mistake'). Let's go quickly through my 'misrepresentations, half-truths and sins'. GM Ivkov does agree with me that (as a Yugoslav team captain) he was a man craving for authority, though according to him for the right reason (I guess it's difficult to argue there about right or wrong – we would likely continue to have different opinions there...). However, in my article I did also praise some of his qualities as a Yugoslav team captain. Preparation: GM Ivkov sticks to his guns about being a 'natural genius', who was not really working, being born clever..., but then again it's a bit surprising (with such genius) that he did not accomplish more! Gligoric: Gligo's score against Ivkov was +8! Ivkov only won his first game in 1965! (Yes, Ivkov perhaps had better tournament results in 1954 and '55 and 1964 and '65, but what happened in the other 10 years in between and later?...) Generally having better results, Gligo was recognized as the Yugoslav number one. Perhaps Ivkov did indeed (as he puts it) not personally feel to be in Gligo's shadow, but what one feels and what is reality is not quite the same thing! Gligo did indeed use the words 'I let him' ('pustio sam ga') to play Board 1, but Gligo also did say that 1964 and 1965 was an excellent period for Ivkov, and I clearly got the impression (from my telephone conversation with Gligo) that Gligoric thought that Ivkov playing Board 1 for the national team in 1965 was justifiable, normal and to his agreement. Now Ivkov provides us with quite a different story, a story that it is no longer possible to check with Gligoric... Nevertheless, I do not see myself misrepresenting the truth or wrongly quoting anyone. Why the games against Fischer were not included in his book (especially the one from 1965, when Fischer was entering his prime...) I really do not know (perhaps huge respect for Fischer), but I certainly do know that those games were not omitted because of Ivkov's modesty (from the quote of Divinsky that Ivkov presents, it is clear that in GM Ivkov's self-loving character there is no place for modesty!). The 1964 Interzonal (my biggest 'sin'): I can only state once again that the Soviet rule (which existed at the time) made it much, much easier for other (non-Soviet) players to qualify, and I am not the only one with this perception. Garry Kasparov (amongst many others) expresses the same opinion in his *My Great Predecessors*. And yes, I also still fail to see that scoring –1 against the top-10 forms a qualifying strategy (it turned out well due to the restriction on the number of Soviets that could qualify and because of Ivkov killing off the lower field, but it doesn't sound likely as a planned strategy (I would hope not) to score –1 against the tournament top). GM Ivkov was a great player, a great player..., but definitely not a genius!

Ivan Sokolov
Lelystad, the Netherlands

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Letters may be edited or abridged

Give and take

I really enjoy reading your magazine, to which I have been subscribing for some 20 years now. I should add that I became a subscriber when I left Paris (where I could purchase it in a couple of chess bookshops) to live in the provinces. In fact I have been reading NIC roughly since it started appearing in 1984.

Yet, the point of my message is not to simply congratulate you or gloss on how faithful I am, but really to suggest an answer to Mrs Philippa Pein's quote in New In Chess 2013/1 that chess is all 'take, take, take and no give'. Really? Wrong, Madam! We give check and sometimes, if we are lucky, we even give mate. But I am certainly not the first person to have mentioned this since the magazine appeared, or, indeed, since the London Chess Classic last December, where Malcolm Pein, a truly wise and charming character by the way, first gave the quote during the commentary.

René Alladaye
Toulouse, France

The Passion

On April 13, Garry Kasparov turned 50, a landmark that deserves a moment of reflection. After all the career of the 13th World Champion practically coincided with the first decades of our magazine. For all those years he always was great copy. Because of his brilliant career and because of his passion and love for the game.
Let's congratulate him with a set of photos from a highlight in his career that is typical of the excitement he treated us to. They take us back to Linares, 1993, Round 10. Kasparov and Karpov are tied for first and play each other with the World Champion having black. It's the 162nd K-K and it's a massacre. Kasparov routs his rival in 27 moves. In the post-mortem, his hands hovering over the board, he crows 'the whole board is black.' The game sees a curious incident that is captured in the photos. On move 24 Kasparov queens his d-pawn but doesn't see a second black queen next to the board. In the absence of the arbiter he puts the pawn on d1 and says, in English, 'queen'. Karpov doesn't see a queen, ignores the threat to his king on e1, says, in Russian, 'kon' (knight) and unperturbed takes a white knight on e4 with his own queen. Kasparov cannot believe his eyes! The arbiter arrives, draws his conclusions from what Kasparov says and then solves the situation by putting a *white* queen on d1! When the situation is finally resolved, Karpov gets two extra minutes and a couple of moves later he resigns.
Kasparov goes on to win the tournament with 10 from 13, one and a half point ahead of Karpov and rising star Anand.

London

The scenario was surreal, verging on the absurd and shaking the beliefs and convictions of the spectators. Vladimir Kramnik, untouchable and majestic for more than two weeks, suffered his first defeat on the last day of the London Candidates' tournament. Front-runner and odds-on favourite Magnus Carlsen, who tends to lose no more than one game every six months, stumbled twice in his last three games. With white. Both titans finished with 8½/14. Both lost a crucial game against the unpredictable Vassily Ivanchuk, who overstepped the time in five of his other games. Instead of a play-off, disputable rules broke the tie. They favoured the exhausted Norwegian, who earned the right to challenge World Champion Vishy Anand in November. In short, those who had the good fortune to be there at the IET on Savoy Place or were among the mass of online viewers that saw the drama unfold, will never forget the sensational twists and turns that decided one of the truly great chess tournaments in history.

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

As in any sport, sensational last rounds are a recurring phenomenon in chess. Given the competitive nature of tournaments, it is probably not too difficult to prove statistically that they are bound to occur quite frequently. Still, it is hard to come up with a last round that can compare with the bizarre finale of the Candidates' tournament in London. Who could have foreseen that both Magnus Carlsen and Vladimir Kramnik would lose their game as they were vying for first place? Perhaps the person who determined that this last round was to be played on 1 April? Or perhaps the Spanish writer Fernando Arrabal, a master of the surreal and the absurd, who unexpectedly turned up to watch the games on the last day?

In hindsight it is possible to reason that what happened was in fact not all that absurd. After all, both players had to play two games. They had to look for their chances in their

On their way to the prize-giving at Downing Street 11: Manager Espen Agdestein, Henrik Carlsen, Magnus Carlsen and his second Peter Heine Nielsen.

Carlsen is Caissa's darling

own game, while keeping an eye on the other table to see if they had to adapt their strategy. For Carlsen the situation was 'relatively' easy. He was White and knew that the tiebreak rules were in his favour. Kramnik had to do half a point better than his rival, which meant that he would probably have to win with black. With so many uncertainties flying around, unusual things are indeed bound to happen.

The last round was the apotheosis of three marvellous weeks that entranced the chess community. Everyone who had seen the Candidates' tournament as the event to look forward to saw their expectations confirmed or surpassed. The venue was the dignified IET, the Institution of Engineering and Technology, on the bank of the Thames and at a stone's throw from Simpson's in the Strand. In other words, in the historical chess heart of London. At £25, the entrance fee was steep enough for a chess event, but the visitors got a lot in return. On entering the atmospheric theatre they were handed a Samsung tablet computer on which they could follow the games accompanied by expert commentary, while watching the players. The alternative was to go to the actual commentary room and enjoy the lively ambiance there created by Nigel Short, Lawrence Trent, Robert Fontaine, Malcolm Pein and others. As AGON's Andrew Paulson said: 'I think that the major innovations that we have brought are visible in their infancy here.'

> Andrew Paulson: 'I think that the major innovations that we have brought are visible in their infancy here.'

Certainly, there were details that could be improved on, but the overall feeling was that this was indeed a huge step in the direction of how chess tournaments should be turned into real events. For instance, we finally witnessed a tournament where all players, without exception, were expected to answer questions after the games, first at a press conference led by Anastasia Karlovich and then in the commentary room for a general audience. For any tennis or Formula 1 fan this may sound like the most natural thing in the world, but strangely enough this is a small revolution in the world of chess.

Paulson and AGON have ambitious plans to innovate chess and we will have to wait and see what they will be able to realize. The American entrepreneur remains his energetic and ebullient self whenever he speaks about his vision and goals, but it is clear that it is not all plain sailing. The Candidates' tournament evoked doubts and uncertainty with staff being hired, fired and hired again at the very last moment. Moreover, the future of the Grand Prix cycle is shrouded in mystery. Strangely enough, as the Candidates' got underway, there was no news at all about the Grand Prix scheduled to be held in Lisbon. Worried by persistent rumours that the tournament had been cancelled and lacking any information, Hikaru Nakamura published an open letter asking for clarity. In a reaction Paulson said that it was 'silly' of the American grandmaster not to ask him or FIDE directly, a rather arrogant reply when you don't provide players with any information about a tournament they are supposed to play in the next month and for which they may want to buy plane tickets and what not.

A few days after Nakamura's letter it transpired that Lisbon had indeed been cancelled (if you can cancel an event that only existed as an idea) and that the third GP tournament will be held in the Swiss city of Zug on the same dates. The sponsor of the Zug GP is the Russian Renova Group, and

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At a stone's throw from the Strand the IET was the perfect venue for the 2013 Candidates'.

apparently the deal was made with the help of FIDE president Kirsan Ilyumzhinov.

As for the fourth GP in May, there is no doubt that 'Madrid' is in jeopardy, too. According to Paulson, there will be a GP on these dates, as this is stipulated in his contract with FIDE, but he wasn't specific about where the fourth leg might move to.

Given their enthusiasm and their wish to develop chess into a sustainable business, one can only wish Paulson and his people well, but the challenge is huge. To begin with, their search for partners is complicated by the economic crisis and the inheritance they got from FIDE, an organization that has never truly tried to market chess.

Under the circumstances, it may seem strange that Paulson has done so little to communicate efficiently with the players, sometimes giving them the impression that he is not truly interested in them. Apparently, he apologized to the players at the prize-giving for mistakes that had been made. Hopefully, he had finally understood that it is perhaps practical not to meet the players at the airport when they arrive for such an important event, but that it is not very diplomatic either. Similarly, the players looked in vain for sandwiches or fruit during the first round. The result was that from the next day on, they started to arrive with plastic bags with their own provisions, a somewhat comical sight in a theatre that otherwise was the perfect stage for a fantastic tournament.

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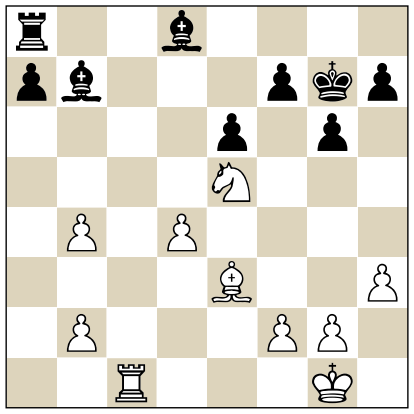
Surprise guest (and ardent chess lover) Fernando Arrabal catches up with his countryman Miguel Illescas in the press room.

Although the last rounds turned this Candidates' into a true epic, the tournament had been rich in stories and awash with drama and suspense all along. Practically every player could point at dramatic turns for the better or, as they are far easier remembered, for the worse. Peter Svidler arrived in London fit and eager after a more structured intake of food and 'lots of water and lots of walking' had resulted in a weight loss of 22 kilos. What's more, he had prepared diligently, and the training sessions paid off in the first few rounds, when he made draws against Kramnik, Grischuk and Aronian ('incredibly comfortable') and won a good game against Radjabov. Things seemed to go his way, especially when, in Round 5, he reached a winning position against Gelfand... and missed his chance. Said Svidler: 'This was the precise moment when my tournament went from being title contender to someone who is playing decent chess and may finish in the plus if things go his way. I didn't win against Boris and then the next day I played an absolutely horrific game against Magnus. No disrespect for Magnus, he played that game really well, but I was still reeling from what happened the day before. If I had won, I would have been tied for first with Levon and Magnus and would have played Magnus (the next round) in a very positive frame of mind.'

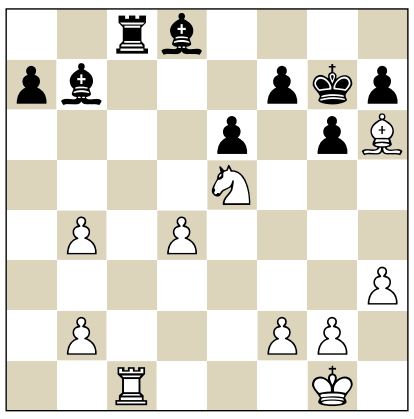
At the same time, Svidler stressed that a win against Gelfand had not necessarily meant that he would have done better overall than he did. After all, he finished with a flourish with two wins in the last two rounds, one of them quite historic, and shared third place. An excellent result, which left him with mixed feelings: 'I scored plus-2 in a Category 22 tournament, won 20 rating points, finished half a point behind the eventual winners. In any other tournament I would be, well maybe not elated, but there would not be any undertones of sadness. But here you feel that in general terms it's a very good result and one I should be proud of, but careerwise I am exactly where I was before it started. Actually I am worse off, because now I won't have a shot at the title, it's gone. It's a strange feeling.'

The same feeling was expressed before the tournament by Levon Aronian, who spoke of the Candidates' as a competition that would see one winner and seven losers. Aronian was armed to the teeth after a training session with the complete national team of Armenia in Jermuk. Perhaps he felt the pressure of an entire nation cheering him on, but in the early rounds he happily accepted the role of one of the two outspoken favourites. His play was inspired and when he got a chance to strike, he struck.



Aronian-Gelfand
position after 25.b4

Aronian had spotted the tactic that Gelfand fell victim to and played the move that he hoped would provoke Black's mistake. **25...♖c8?** And Gelfand fell for it. **26.♗h6+!**



27...♔g8 26...♔xh6 obviously runs into 27.♖xc8 ♗xc8 28.♘xf7+; and 26...♔f6 is met by 27.♗g5+ ♔xg5 28.♘xf7+ ♔f6 29.♖xc8, in both cases with an easy win for White. **27.♖xc8 ♗xc8 28.♘c6** The knight is not only capable of forking rooks. Black is lost. **28...♗f6 29.b5 ♗d7 30.g4 g5 31.h4 gxh4 32.g5 ♗xc6 33.bxc6 ♗d8 34.♔g2 ♗c7 35.♔h3** Black resigned.

The next day Aronian also won against Vassily Ivanchuk, who got into time-trouble in a level position and lost on time after 34 moves. That was the same number of moves he had managed one day earlier, when he lost on time against Radjabov, in this case in a hopeless position. In total Ivanchuk would lose five games on time, including a second one against Aronian in Round 10, when he did remarkably well with a Budapest Gambit, only to lose control when he ran out of time again. As he alternated these losses on time with games that showed his true talent, the Ukrainian became a bit of a loose cannon, an uncertain factor that would play tricks on the leaders in the final rounds.

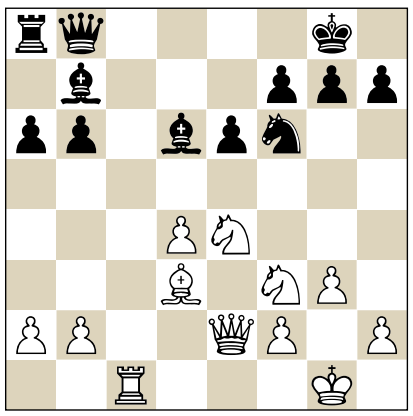
One might argue that Ivanchuk was the main victim of the unexplainable decision to play without increments, which these days everyone is so used to. Why there should be a different time-control for the most important tournament of the year was hard to grasp. Another player who clearly struggled with the absence of increments was Alexander Grischuk, who quite soon realized that he could not go for the frantic time-trouble skirmishes that he usually thrives in when your time simply runs out.

The win against Ivanchuk was Teimour Radjabov's only win in London. The Azeri number one, who started the tournament ranked fourth in the world, was barely recognizable. He lost half his games and dropped a massive 31 rating points. Radjabov was at a loss as to why he played so poorly and guessed that family circumstances and a lack of practice in recent months might have played a role. Perhaps he felt extra pressure because the overall sponsor was SOCAR, the state oil company of Azerbaijan, which also supports him personally. Despite his misfortune he remained admirably cheerful and continued to be a lively speaker at the press conferences. Hopefully he is of the same view as his father, who said somewhat philosophically: 'This was Teimour's worst tournament in 20 years. Let's hope it will take another 20 years before we see something like this again.'

Halfway through, Aronian's plus-3 score was good enough for shared

first place with Carlsen. The Armenian also defeated Radjabov. The only game where he was in serious trouble was a superb fight in Round 5 against Vladimir Kramnik. Meanwhile, Carlsen collected points from Gelfand, Grischuk and Svidler. The Norwegian played the strong and refined chess that has become his hallmark, and claimed the role he was supposed to play after his recent brilliant successes. The worries that Garry Kasparov expressed eloquently before the event ('This is Fischer's worst nightmare, alone against 7 Soviets') didn't seem to bother him. And he certainly didn't lack confidence. When he was asked, after his first win in Round 3, whether he had become nervous when he failed to win his first two encounters, he replied without batting an eyelid that in Wijk aan Zee he had also won his first game in Round 3 and had then cruised to plus-7. 'Why wouldn't that be possible here?'

Aronian and Carlsen had a comfortable lead, one and a half points ahead of Kramnik and Svidler. Kramnik drew all his games in the first half, but it was clear that he was in excellent form and that he was only lacking a little bit of luck. Perhaps his approach was too cautious. While he could claim that he never got into any danger out of the opening, the advantages he reached were insufficient to score full points. For Kramnik a turning point came in Round 7, when he could have ended up in serious trouble if his opponent had been alert.



Gelfand – Kramnik
position after 18.♖xc1

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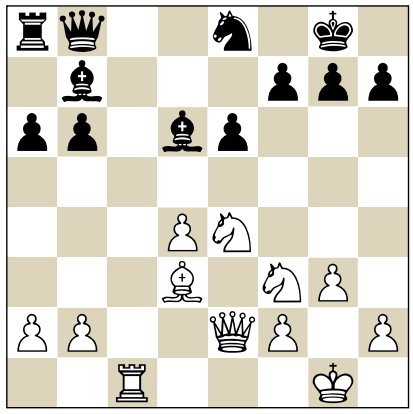
Robert Fontaine, AGON's chief of staff, and chief arbiter Werner Stubenvoll listen to Andrew Paulson as a new round is about to start.

There is not much going on, and if he wants Black can exchange some more pieces on e4 and reach a relatively easy draw. Instead, in his wish to keep the game going, Kramnik played the artificial **18...♘e8?**



19.♘ed2? A tame retreat that misses an excellent double opportunity, as both knight sorties to g5 would have been embarrassing for Black. To begin with, there is 19.♘fg5 h6 (or 19...g6 20.♘xf7! ♔xf7 21.♘g5+ ♔f6 22.♕xe6+ ♔xg5 23.♕h3!, and the black king will soon perish) 20.♕h5! hxg5 21.♘xg5 ♘f6 22.♕xf7+ ♔h8 23.♘xe6 ♕g8 24.♕xb7 ♖b8 25.♕xg7+ ♕xg7 26.♘xg7 ♔xg7 27.♖c6, and Black is in trouble. No fun either is 19.♘eg5 h6 20.♗g6 fxg6 (20...hxg5 21.♘xg5) 21.♕xe6+ ♔h8 22.♘f7+ ♔h7 23.♘h4 ♘f6 24.♘xd6, and Black should be lost. After **19...♕d8 20.♗e4 ♖c8 21.♕f1 ♖xc1 22.♕xc1 ♕c8 23.♕c3 ♘f6 24.♗xb7 ♕xb7 25.♘e5 ♘d5 26.♕c6 ♕xc6 27.♘xc6** the result was no longer in doubt and on move 36 the draw was sealed.

Gelfand, one of the five players in London who also played in the World Championship tournament in Mexico City in 2007, was obviously disappointed with his result. He had prepared well, but it didn't work out. 'You cannot always do well, you just have to learn your lesson and go on to the next tournament. And the next cycle. I don't think my chess is inferior to anybody else's. I just have to do well either in the Grand Prix or the World Cup.' Or as he typically put it when he was asked about his unwavering ambition at one of the press conferences: 'As Kortchnoi once told me, once you learn how to swim, you can swim for the rest of your life.'

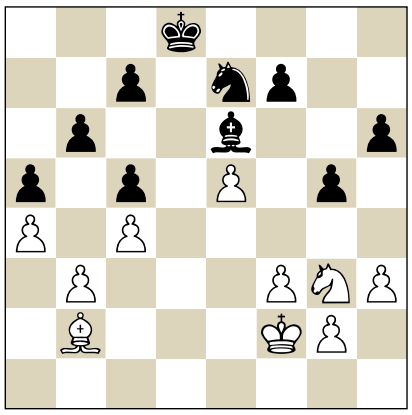
Gelfand didn't want to look for excuses, but he did want to point out that he had been unpleasantly surprised when he found out that the dates of the tournament had been moved without any notification. 'For

a young player this may not be important, but when you get older every day counts. When I signed to play Zurich, I knew I had three weeks to recover, but in the end it was less than two and I could not prepare the way I had intended. We are expected to be professionals, but can you imagine Wimbledon or the World Cup being moved by a week a couple of months before the event?'

Kramnik drew a remarkable conclusion after his slip-up against Gelfand, one that would have immediate consequences in the next rounds. 'Usually I am punished for this, but this time I escaped. I had a strange feeling after the game. I was shocked, but I also saw it as a good sign. I tend to do this kind of thing once in every tournament, so there is a good chance I will not do it again. Maybe luck was starting to be my partner and not my opponent. This was a turning point. I continued to play provocatively, as I was still behind, but I was feeling that luck was on my side now. Quite a normal feeling for my opponents, but not for me, I can assure you.'

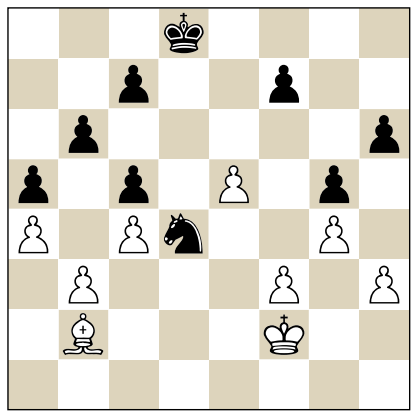
His first victim was Peter Svidler, who described his loss as follows: 'It was a typical Kramnik-Svidler game. If I get out of the opening semi-alive, I might do OK, but if I don't... That game he played exceptionally well. This is the feeling I dread. You get an unpleasant position against Vlad and then he just doesn't let go.'

The next day Kramnik got a slight plus against Carlsen, but a precise and pointed defence led to a draw. In Round 10, Kramnik faced another fellow-countryman and the way he won again must have set off alarm bells in the Norwegian camp. Grischuk's sudden disintegration from an innocuous position was shocking for a player of his level, but it was also clear that Kramnik was on a roll and that several other opponents might succumb to his pressure.



Grischuk-Kramnik
position after 27.♔f2

A Berlin Wall has led to an equal position. With the following provocative move (in Kramnik's words) Black leads his opponent astray. **27...♗f5 28.♘xf5 ♘xf5 29.g4 ♘d4**



30.♗xd4? And Grischuk loses control. After 30.♔e3 Black has to retreat with 30...♘e6 (as 30...♘xb3 31. e6 would be better for White), and the position is still level. **30...cxd4 31.♔e2 ♔d7 32.♔d3 c5 33.♔e4 ♔e6** And suddenly it is clear that the pawn ending is totally lost for White. Kramnik converts with ease. **34.f4 gxf4 35.♔xf4 d3 36.♔e3 ♔xe5 37.♔xd3 ♔f4 38.♔e2 ♔g3 39.♔e3 ♔xh3 40.♔f4 ♔h4 41.♔f5 ♔g3** White resigned.

After 10 rounds Carlsen was in the lead. While Kramnik kept his chances alive, one full point behind the leader, the top seed played probably his best game against Gelfand and collected

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his fourth win. Aronian also won in Round 10, but he needed the help of Ivanchuk, who first pleased and then disappointed the fans of the Budapest Gambit. Aronian was only half a point behind Carlsen, but deep down inside he knew that his chances had diminished dramatically. For him the turning point came in Round 9. Gelfand played an impressive game and dealt the Armenian favourite a blow from which he would not really recover. A further loss against Svidler followed in Round 11 and then, in Round 12, Aronian ruined his chances for good with a slip-up in the endgame after a fierce and spectacular clash with Kramnik.

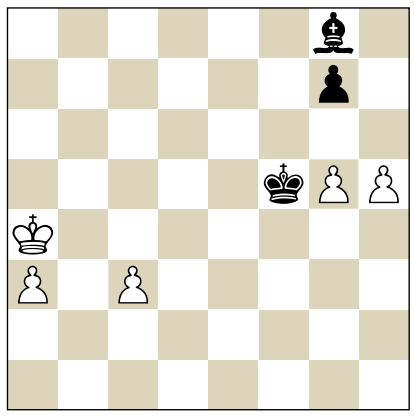
Dropping out of the race for first place with two rounds to go was a heavy blow for Aronian after his play in the first half had looked so promising. 'There are various reasons for this, which I will keep to myself. I'll have to work on this. Mainly I got a bit too concentrated, too focused. When you try your best in every game the blunders will come. It's psychologically not possible to play your best all the time. In my game against Gelfand I was trying to play the most precise moves and then I blundered. That heavily affected my mood and I collapsed. Losing is not a big deal as long as you recover and I showed that in many tournaments, but for some reason during this tournament it didn't work out the way it normally does. I don't want to make excuses. I am going to try to play better than this. In general my play was not bad in the first couple of rounds. Even in some games in the second part. But there were of course two different players in the first and second half.'

Magnus Carlsen arrived for Round 12 with a half-point lead over Kramnik, who had won a fine game against Radjabov the previous day, and a full point ahead of Aronian, who had been severely punished by Svidler for his over-optimistic play. The remaining schedule gave the Norwegian good grounds to be optimistic about his chances. Nothing seemed to indicate that he was about to go through the four most exhausting and excruciatingly tense days in his young career. The darkest day was clearly Round 12. While Aronian and Kramnik entered into a wild tussle that left everyone guessing (in the post-mortem there was a moment when they both said they had believed to be winning in the position under scrutiny), Carlsen achieved nothing against Ivanchuk's clever opening play, missed a chance to get an advantage after all, and then drifted into a position that became more unpleasant by the minute. As Carlsen pondered his moves, it became clear in the press room, and no doubt not only there, that the world's number one is regarded as almost untouchable these days. Even when he was a pawn down and fighting to get his pieces coordinated, many were mainly wondering how he was going to save the draw. One of the few who didn't let themselves be deceived was Jon Speelman, who predicted Carlsen's loss when there was every reason to. Ivanchuk needed some time, but after 90 moves he won his second game in the tournament.

NEW IN CHESS

Playing without increment was definitely a serious handicap for time-trouble addict Alexander Grischuk.

And there was more misery to come for Carlsen. The clash between Aronian and Kramnik had finally reached calmer waters and a draw seemed at hand, when the struggling Armenian made a serious mistake.



Aronian-Kramnik
position after 49...♔f5

50.g6? This loses. As indicated by Jon Speelman, White should have gone 50. h6 g6 51.♔b5 ♔xg5 52.c4 ♔xh6 53. a4, when the black king is one square further away and it is a draw after 53... g5 54.a5 g4 55.a6 g3 56.a7 g2 57.a8♕ g1♕ 58.♕f8+. **50...♔g5 51.♔b5 ♔xh5 52.a4 ♔xg6 53.a5 ♔f6 54. a6 ♗d5 55.c4 ♗a8 56.♔b6 ♔e5 57.♔c7 g5 58.♔b8 ♗e4 59.♔c7 g4 60.a7 g3 61.c5 ♗a8 62.♔b8 ♗c6** White resigned.

How happy can you be? Magnus Carlsen explodes with joy after he's done the impossible and ground down Teimour Radjabov from a seeming deadlock.

NEW IN CHESS

In one day Carlsen's calm and collected and invariably successful performance had turned into a nightmare. Now he was trailing Kramnik by half a point, and even if the Norwegian played his best in the last rounds, there were no guarantees that he would catch the Russian, who was clearly on fire.

The ensuing last free day must have been torture for Carlsen. The bleakest scenarios went through his head and he even had nightmares that he would lose the tournament on tiebreak. Ironically, the tiebreak was one of the best things he had going for him. As a close finish was expected, the press began to see how many rapid or blitz games the playoff would consist of in case of a tie, only to discover that an actual playoff was most unlikely. Almost certainly one of the tiebreak rules would decide, most notably the second one, which favoured the player with the highest number of wins. And that would be Carlsen if he caught Kramnik, who had not lost a single game so far, a feat that obviously also deserved to be a tiebreaker. The players themselves knew the rules full well, even though they had not been too happy with them when they discovered them in their contracts. But then it was too late to change anything.

Carlsen's resurrection came in Round 13, a round that was hardly less dramatic than the twelfth round, but this time luck was fully on his side. Kramnik, as White, tried very hard to beat Gelfand, but the Israeli wouldn't budge, and after 59 moves the game was drawn. For a long, long time it seemed as if Carlsen wasn't going to win his game either. Playing Black against Radjabov he had ended up in a position in which his opponent would run no risk whatsoever if he just stayed put. Having no choice, Carlsen kept shuffling around his pieces, even though it was hard to see what he might wish to achieve. A first glimmer of hope appeared when Radjabov exchanged rooks. And the first cries of excitement were heard when the Azeri unnecessarily created a weakness by playing 64.a4. It was the beginning of the end. The position was opened up and, running out of time, Radjabov failed to put up the toughest resistance and resigned on move 89. 'Masterful harakiri', as Kramnik had every right to call it later.

For Carlsen it didn't matter how he had won. He had won and he was alive again. Coming off the stage he burst into the press room and with a roar from the bottom of his heart he expressed his relief in front of his manager Espen Agdestein. With one round to go he had his fate in his own hands again. Playing white against Svidler, he had to do at least not worse than Kramnik, who was Black against the unpredictable Ivanchuk. It was going to be a grandiose finale that would be watched all around the world and indeed, when the key games approached the time-control and the tension became unbearable, several websites collapsed under the number of visitors. That they would both lose, was probably not an option Carlsen considered at that moment; he was mainly elated that he was back in the race.

As said before, the double loss is less hard to explain in hindsight. Kramnik said he knew that Ivanchuk would come after him as well, or in any case make sure he would not lose. The Russian also emphasized that he had done everything correctly when he defended his strategy against criticism that had inevitably been levelled at him. 'I believe I did everything right. I assessed my chances at 20 per cent, no more. You cannot share, you have black, the guy (Carlsen) has white, and it was absolutely sure to me that he was going to play it safe and keep some control to see what would happen in my game. Now it's of course easy to say that I should have played safely and made a draw, but it's absolutely clear that in that case Magnus would have easily made a draw, too. He only lost because of the way I played, because I was keeping the tension and was taking risks. It was possible for White to go wrong. If you look at the game between Carlsen and Svidler, you can see that the first three hours nothing much was happening. He was passing on ways to sterilize the game completely. I knew this was the right way to play. Then I considered two possibilities (to win).

The most likely was that Vassily would go wrong in time-trouble. And there was a very small chance that Magnus would get nervous and would start to go wrong. But then I knew that I had to be in time to save my game, because I knew that I was going to be worse. This moment actually happened. We reached this position when I had about five minutes to totally reassess the whole situation and start playing for a draw. But the problem was that when I could still do it, Magnus was still not lost. In hindsight, this was the only point when I could have taken over and won the tournament. On move 30, when I could play Knight e6, a move I would have made in any other situation, no doubt about it, and then I am a little bit worse, but it's not very difficult to make a draw. But then I have no chance to win at all, and I wanted to keep the option to let Vassily go wrong if a win was needed. That was a brief moment. When it became clear that Magnus was in trouble, I was also already in big trouble.'

Kramnik compared the tiebreak rules to the flipping of a coin, but didn't want to be bitter in his analysis. 'I have mixed feelings. I played well. I wouldn't go so far as to say it was the best tournament of my life. If you take Dortmund 2001 or Tal 2007, I think those were not worse at least. I put a lot of effort in my preparation and I played with spirit. In my opinion I played clearly the most interesting chess. I don't know if it was the best, that is difficult to say. If you don't consider the last few rounds, Magnus also played very good chess. The last three rounds he dropped his level quite seriously, so all in all it was not so great maybe. For his standard. Still, I wouldn't say I played clearly better than Magnus, it was more or less the same. It's quite rare for such a long tournament that I feel I don't have to reproach myself for anything. I think I did everything very well.

'You can say that I was not very lucky because the circumstances were against me at the very end, but all in all there is a feeling of satisfaction. Strangely enough. I would have thought that in such a situation I would just be disappointed, but it's not true. Because I know I did everything honestly and I did everything I could. And after all, the next Candidates' is only one year away, and I am quite confident that I will have a chance to fight.

'A big point is that my main goal is not to become World Champion and to prove anything to anyone. I have other motives, and I think that this is the reason why I didn't commit suicide (laughs). I also want to show good chess, good spirit, or, in the Eastern manner, to show my Zen. If I know that I do my job well that is also satisfactory. That is why I can take all of this quite coolly. Of course I know that I was extremely close, but it's not the only thing that counts in my opinion.'

Carlsen was obviously delighted that his mission had been accomplished after all. He didn't even want to think about the situation he might have been in, and when he was asked what failure would have done to him, he gave the optimist's answer (with a grin): 'I don't want to think about that. I was most of all focused on qualifying and winning the tournament, not on how to not qualify.' But he was open about his atypical collapse: 'I guess to some extent the pressure got to me a bit. And I was also tired, which is not a good combination. In general I made a lot of poor decisions, both practically and also pure chess decisions that I don't normally make. I think also some credit has to be given to my opponents obviously, but in general I don't lose those positions. I made many more mistakes in those games than I made in the first 11 rounds combined.'

The first 11 rounds were also his reference when he said that in that phase he had clearly played the best chess and that he therefore believed he was the deserved winner, even though he had been lucky with the tiebreak.

And then he looked ahead to the match against Anand, a match that must have been on his mind for much longer than he will generally admit: 'The difference (between Anand and me) is that I have been winning tournaments and he has been holding on to his title. It will be an interesting clash between two different ideas of what constitutes the best player in the world. If I am well prepared and I put pressure on him like I usually do, I have every chance to win. I am sure he will play the best chess he's played in years, and it will be very interesting.'

NOTES BY
Peter Heine Nielsen

SI 31.5 – B30
Magnus Carlsen
Boris Gelfand
London 2013 (10)

Introductory note by Magnus Carlsen:
'My game against Gelfand in Round 10, annotated by Peter Heine Nielsen below, represents the level of chess I aspired to play at in the Candidates'. Although I did not succeed in every game, I take great comfort in having reached the main objective, which was to qualify for the World Championship match against V. Anand. I would like to express my gratitude to Peter Heine and the other seconds for their valuable help in reaching this goal.'

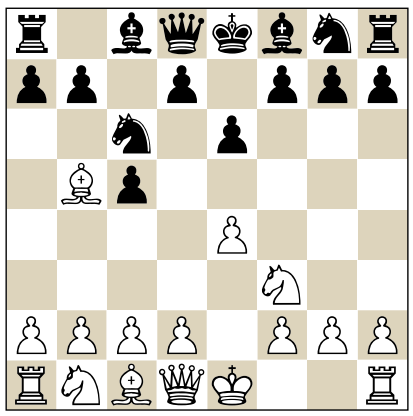
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6

Opening-wise the two players are basically opposites. While Carlsen moves around a lot, Gelfand, both in the World Championship match against Anand and in this Candidates' tournament, remained completely loyal to the Grünfeld against 1.d4 and the Sveshnikov against 1.e4.

3.♗b5!?

Sveshnikov was right! At least judged by the current trend, White players seem to concede that the actual Sveshnikov Sicilian is fine for Black, and that 3.♗b5 is the way to fight for an advantage. Proving Sveshnikov's claim made years ago, Anand did well with 3.♗b5 in the match, and later both Caruana and Ponomariov caused Gelfand some problems.

3...e6

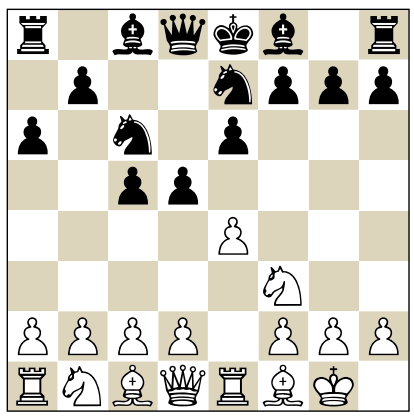


4.0-0 In Round 7, Magnus played 4.♗xc6 against Radjabov, and after 4...bxc6 5.b3 d6 tried 6.0-0!?, deviating from 6.e5 which was played by both McShane and Grischuk against Radjabov. The idea is that after 6...e5 we have a position known from 3...d6 4.♗xc6 bxc6 5.0-0, only with the white pawn on b3 instead of b2. Not a huge difference, but definitely leading to a playable position for White.
However, Radjabov played 6...♘e7!?, and in a complex position, Magnus hallucinated and was suddenly lost, only to save the game after inaccurate play by Radjabov.

4...♘ge7 5.♖e1 a6!?

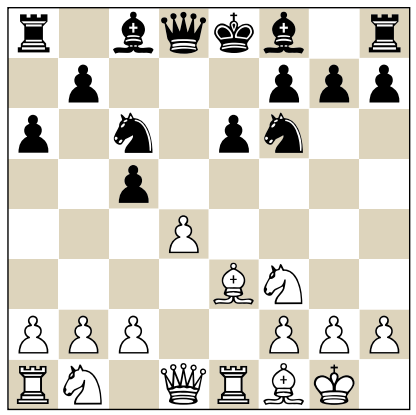
In the Tashkent Grand Prix against Caruana and Ponomariov, Gelfand chose 5...♘d4. Part of the reason behind his ability to successfully repeat his openings, is having small surprises within them, and for this Candidates' he had prepared 5...a6, which he had already used successfully against Grischuk in Round 6.

6.♗f1 d5



7.exd5!? I was seconding Magnus in London, but we were also getting help from other seconds online. They suggested this line, thinking it leads to a fairly pleasant position, with a long game ahead, which should suit Magnus' style excellently.
Grischuk played 7.d3, and we saw an unusually sharp fight for pawn structure with big decisions early on: 7...d4!? 8.e5!? ♘d5 9.c4!? dxc3 10.bxc3 ♖b8 11.♗b2 b5!?, and after a tactical error by Grischuk, Gelfand got a winning position, although the game ended in a draw.

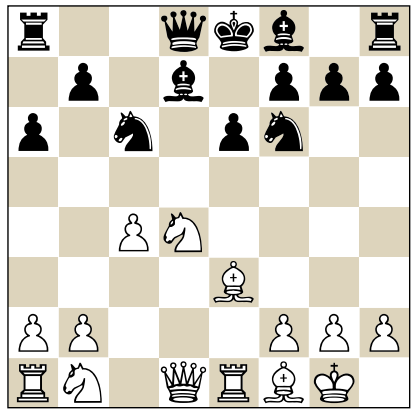
7...♘xd5 8.d4 ♘f6 9.♗e3



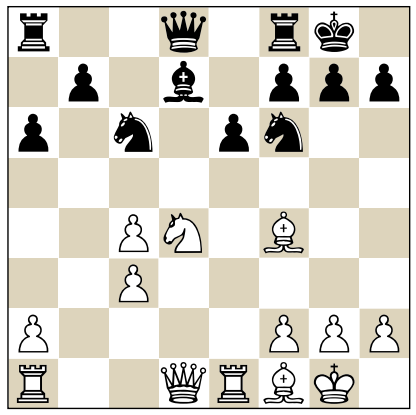
9...cxd4 9...♗e7 might be slightly more accurate, as after 10.c4 0-0 11.♘c3 cxd4 12.♘xd4, instead of 12...♗d7, Black can also play 12...♕c7, intending 13...♖d8.

10.♘xd4 ♗d7 11.c4

This is the concept. White has a bit more space and a queenside majority. Black, of course, has a healthy and solid position, though.



11...♘xd4 After 11...♗e7 12.♘c3 0-0, White has been quite successful with 13.♘f3!?, and this is an argument for Gelfand's choice to make relieving exchanges before it is too late.
11...♗b4!? is a principal choice, but after 12.♘c3 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 0-0 14.♗f4



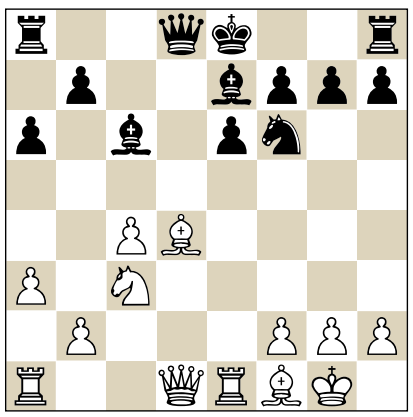
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

White's activity more than compensates for his structural weaknesses. After 14...♘xd4!? 15.cxd4 ♗c6 the typical Nimzo pawn structure is suddenly surprisingly similar to Game 11 in the Anand-Gelfand match, where Gelfand had a pleasant position with the two bishops before that game was drawn.

12.♗xd4 ♗c6 13.♘c3 ♗e7 14.a3!?

Magnus was happy with this decision, as he thought the interpolation of a3/a5 probably favoured White.

14.♕d3 0-0 15.♖ad1 was played in the stem game Kinmark (that's actually Kramnik spelled backwards, as my Swedish friends have pointed out!)-Paoli, Eksjö 1975, which was also slightly more pleasant for White.

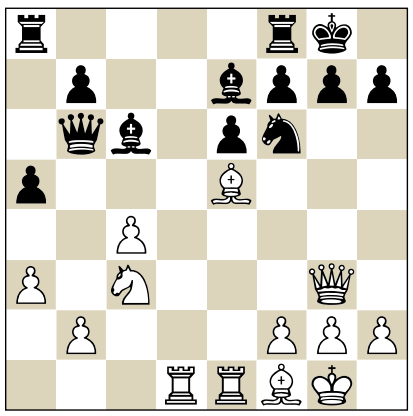


14...a5!? The principled approach, and what one would expect from Gelfand. 14...0-0 15.b4 is what White wants, but as usual this only gives a slight edge.

15.♕d3 0-0

15...a4?! is an ambitious attempt, but after 16.♖ad1 0-0 17.♕g3 White's initiative becomes too strong.

16.♖ad1 ♕c7 17.♗e5 ♕b6 18.♕g3



RAY MORRIS-HILL

Two men in power. Magnus Carlsen received the winner's medal in the residence of the British Chancellor of the Exchequer John Osborne at Downing Street 11.

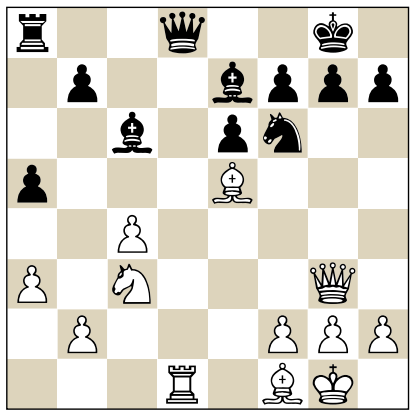
18...♖fd8

An interesting way to defend would be 18...♘h5!? 19.♕h3 ♘f6, as now ♗c7 is no longer annoying and Black threatens ...♖fd8. Still, White keeps an edge after 20.♗d3 h6 21.♗d4 ♕c7 22.b4!.

19.♖xd8+

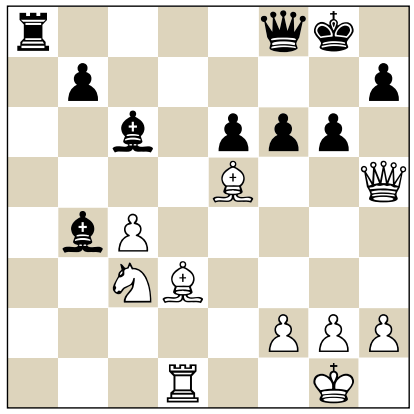
At the press conference, Magnus said he wasted quite some time on 19.♘d5, which fails due to a small tactic: 19...exd5 20.♗d4 ♗c5 21.♗xf6 ♗xf2+!, leading to a drawish ending.

19...♕xd8 20.♖d1



20...♕b6

Jon Speelman mentioned 20...♕f8!? at the press-conference, to which Gelfand quite rightly replied that from a practical perspective it has no huge relevance. His concept was to hamper White's queenside play in an ambitious manner. Still, this more defensive move does have some bite, as the following line shows: 21.b4!? axb4 22.axb4 ♘h5! 23.♕g4 ♗xb4 24.♕xh5 f6! 25.♗d3 g6!.

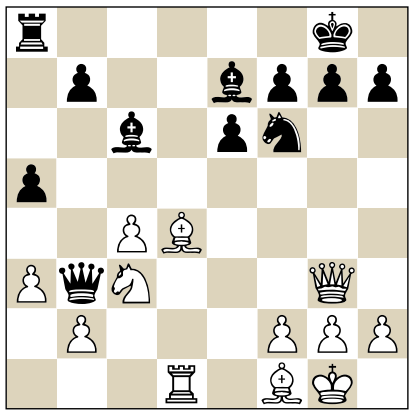


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Amazingly, this holds for Black, as after 26.♗xg6? (26.♕g4! fxe5 27.♕xe6+ ♕f7 28.♕xe5 ♖a5, and Black has enough compensation to draw here) 26...hxg6 27.♕xg6+ ♕g7, due to the mate on g2, White cannot take on f6 with the queen and thus suddenly ends up a piece short!

Instead of 21.b4, probably 21.♗d3!? is stronger, and White stays comfortable.

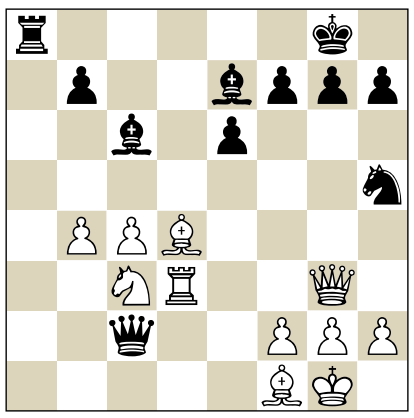
21.♗d4 ♕b3



22.♖d3

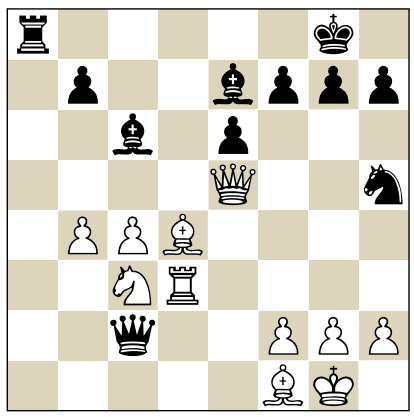
22.♖d2 is more modest, but White's position is still pleasant after e.g. 22...a4 23.♕c7 ♘d7 24.♗e3 ♗d8 25.♕g3. But the game continuation puts much more direct pressure on Black.

22...♕c2 23.b4! axb4 24.axb4 ♘h5



25.♕e5

The computer move 25.♕e3!? also keeps an edge, the main point being 25...♗xb4 26.♕g5 g6 (26...f6! is a much better fighting chance: 27.♕xh5 e5 28.♕f5 ♖f8!, and although White is better, Black keeps definite fighting chances) 27.♘e4! ♗xe4 28.♕e5!, and the black position suddenly collapses.

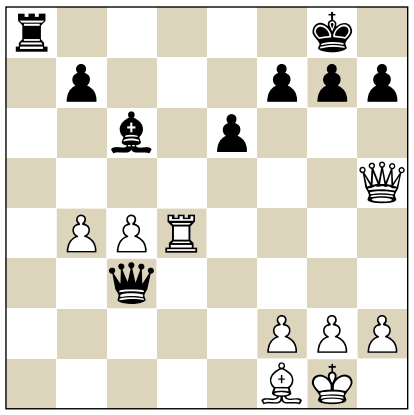


25...♗f6

The toughest defence. Both players saw 25...♖a1 26.♘d1! ♖xd1 27.♖xd1 ♕xd1 28.♕b8+ ♗f8 29.♗c5 h6 30.♕xf8+ ♔h7. Now 31.♕d6! is the key, bringing back the queen to the defence, when the ensuing endgames will be just winning for White due to his queenside majority and bishop pair.

31.♕xf7? ♗e4!, however, would completely reverse the situation, as ...♗d3 cannot be stopped.

26.♕xh5 ♗xd4 27.♖xd4 ♕xc3

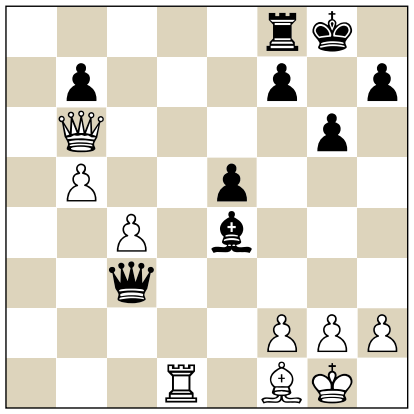


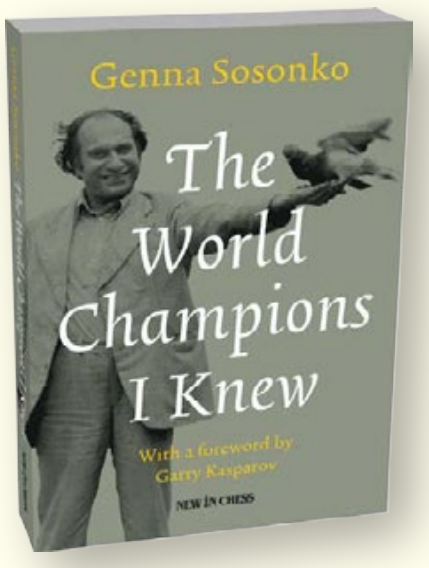
28.♕a5! The point behind 23 b4. Without this, White wouldn't even be better. But now with this intermezzo, White just manages to coordinate in time, and his queenside majority secures a huge edge.

28...♖f8 29.♕b6 e5 The only way to fight. **30.♖d1**

30.♖d8!? g6 31.b5 ♗e4 32.♖d7 transposes to the line below.

30...g6 31.b5 ♗e4





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				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TPR
1	Carlsen Magnus	IGM	NOR	2872	* *	½ ½	1 0	½ ½	1 1	1 ½	½ 0	½ 1	8½	2854
2	Kramnik Vladimir	IGM	RUS	2810	½ ½	* *	½ 1	½ 1	½ ½	½ 1	½ 0	½ 1	8½	2863
3	Svidler Peter	IGM	RUS	2747	0 1	½ 0	* *	½ 1	½ ½	½ ½	½ 1	1 ½	8	2842
4	Aronian Levon	IGM	ARM	2809	½ ½	½ 0	½ 0	* *	1 0	½ ½	1 1	1 1	8	2833
5	Gelfand Boris	IGM	ISR	2740	0 0	½ ½	½ ½	0 1	* *	½ ½	½ ½	½ 1	6½	2764
6	Grischuk Alexander	IGM	RUS	2764	0 ½	½ 0	½ ½	½ ½	½ ½	* *	½ 1	½ ½	6½	2761
7	Ivanchuk Vassily	IGM	UKR	2757	½ 1	½ 1	½ 0	0 0	½ ½	½ 0	* *	0 1	6	2741
8	Radjabov Teimour	IGM	AZE	2793	½ 0	½ 0	0 ½	0 0	½ 0	½ ½	1 0	* *	4	2628

32.♕f6?!

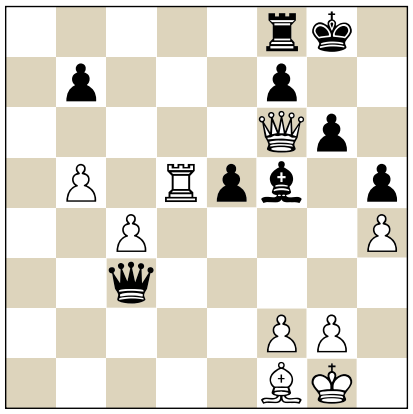
Better was 32.h4!?.

Or 32.♖d7 (which seems almost winning, the idea being 33.♕d6 next, and if now 32...♗f5, then 33.♖xb7) 32...♕e1 33.♕d6.

32...h5?!

32...♗f5! was a very good fighting chance: 33.♖d5 ♗e6 34.♕xe5 ♕xe5 35.♖xe5 ♖c8. As this could easily be drawn for Black, White should probably not liquidate into this endgame. An important line is 36.c5 ♔f8 37. ♗d3 ♗d7!, followed by ...f6, winning back the pawn.

33.h4 ♗f5 34.♖d5

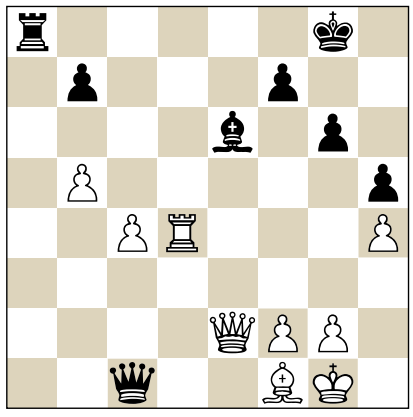


34...♕c1!?

Now 34...♗e6 35.♕xe5 ♕xe5 36. ♖xe5 ♖c8 37.c5 ♔f8 38.♗d3 ♗d7 is different, as ...f6 would weaken the g6-pawn, and h4/h5 greatly favours White.

35.♕xe5 ♗e6 36.♖d4 ♖a8 37.♕e2

Gelfand has reasonable activity for the pawn, but in time-pressure he commits a few inaccuracies, which Magnus punishes mercilessly.



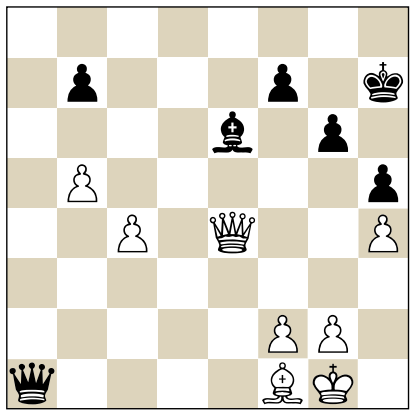
37...♔h7?!

For instance, 37...♕a1 38.♕d1 ♔g7 was a much tougher defence, when after 39.c5? 39...♕c3! is one resource.

38.♖d1 ♕c3 39.♕e4 ♖a1?

But 39...♖a7, as the computer indicates as a way to fight on, is impossible for a human to play.

40.♖xa1 ♕xa1



41.c5!

The time-control has been reached, but now White is completely winning, as nothing will stop his pawns from marching forward.

41...♕c3 42.♕xb7

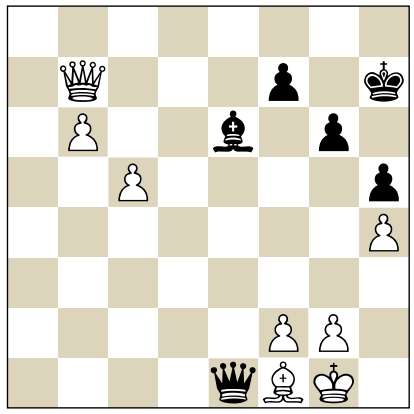
Indeed, 42.b6 would be safer, but Magnus missed Gelfand's reply to his next move.

42...♕e1!?

In case of 42...♕xc5 White goes 43. b6, followed by ♕a6, and the pawn just queens.

43.b6

After the game, in his comments at the press-conference, Magnus said that he quite quickly recovered from the shock, and that despite losing the bishop on f1, it didn't really change much, as what matters are the white pawns queening.



43...♗c4 44.♕f3! ♕xf1+ 45.♔h2 ♕b1 46.b7 ♕b5 47.c6 ♗d5 48.♕g3!

Controlling g2 and h4, eliminating even the smallest attempts at counterplay, and simultaneously queening the b-pawn. Gelfand resigned.

This was probably Magnus' best game in London. He achieved only a small edge in the opening, but with accurate tactics managed to enlarge it, and then increased it to decisive proportions in Gelfand's time-trouble.

This win gave Carlsen the sole lead, but much more was still to happen...

NOTES BY
Anish Giri

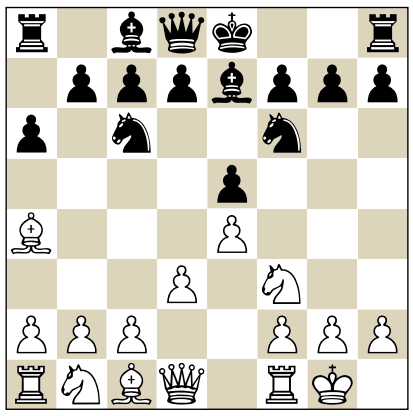
RL 13.5 – C84
Peter Svidler
Magnus Carlsen
London 2013 (6)

Up to this game, both Magnus Carlsen and Peter Svidler were in the fight for the top spots (as well as Levon Aronian, obviously). This game would decide who would be in the lead and who would have to play catch-up.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7

The Ruy Lopez serves Magnus quite well with both colours (SPOILER ALERT: except for the last round, against the same Peter Svidler). I guess the slow and relaxed manoeuvring appeals to him.

6.d3



This move is a popular way these days to avoid the main lines of the Spanish. However, here, too, the theory has been developing quite rapidly of late.

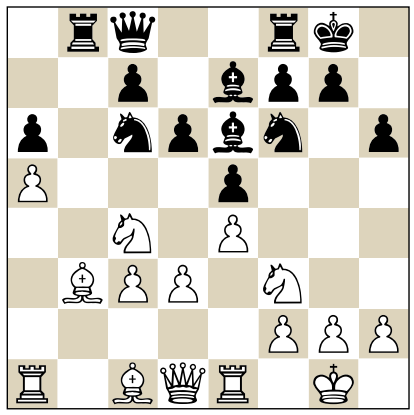
6...b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.a4 b4

Not the only move, obviously, but it is considered the most principled one nowadays.

9.♘bd2

Somewhat inconsistent, as White could have started with 9.a5. But those are nuances, and I doubt I know them better than Svidler and Carlsen.

9...0-0 10.a5 ♗e6 11.♘c4 ♖b8 12.c3 bxc3 13.bxc3 h6 14.♖e1 ♕c8



15.♗c2!?

An interesting novelty, which I believe was prepared by Peter. Unfortunately, he mixed up things further on. White is not scared of doubling his c-pawns and is ready to fight for the central squares, with ideas like ♘e3 or ♕e2 and d4.

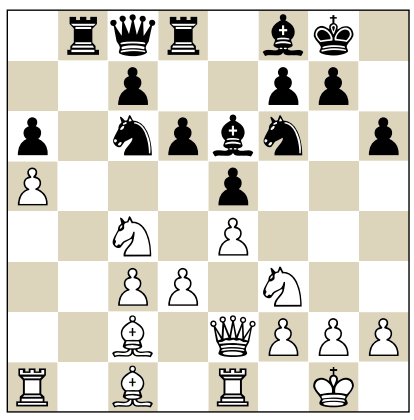
15.♗a4 was tried recently by another Spanish specialist, Peter Leko, but it didn't seem to lead anywhere: 15...♗xc4! 16.♗xc6 ♗b5 17.♗xb5 ♖xb5 18.c4 ♖b7 19.d4 c5!?, and soon Black was even starting to push in Leko-Adams, London GP 2012.

The old move is 15.♗a3, which was played in a couple of games, e.g. Kasimdzhanov-Sargissian, Sutovsky-Akopian and Grischuk-Zhao Xue, all three in 2005.

15...♖d8 16.♕e2

16.h3!? is also possible, for example 16...♗f8 17.♘e3, and now White is ready to meet Black's breakthrough 17...d5 18.exd5 ♘xd5 19.♘xd5 ♖xd5 with interesting ideas like 20.♗a4!? ♖xa5 21.♗xh6!?.

16...♗f8



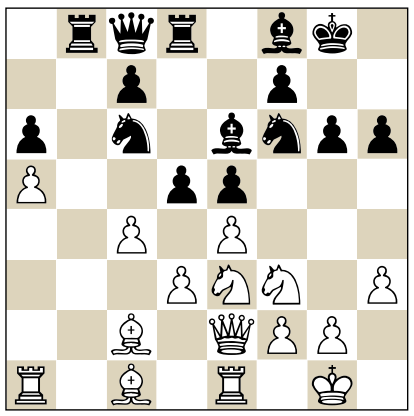
17.♘e3?

Apparently Svidler mixed up something, as he now allows Black to play ...d5 in all comfort.

Instead, 17.h3! was needed first, when Black has to come up with a useful move. I guess that move would be 17...g6, and now White has a wide choice of moves and ideas: 18.♘e3!? (18.♗e3 is suggested by the best of the best, but I must say it feels somewhat unnatural. But 18.d4!? is a viable alternative, although Black should be perfectly fine after taking and ...d6-d5: 18...exd4 19.♘xd4 ♘xd4 20.cxd4 d5 21.♘e5 c5 22.exd5 ♗xd5 23.dxc5) 18...

> 'It's surprising that Magnus fails to spot a cheap tactic, his speciality.'

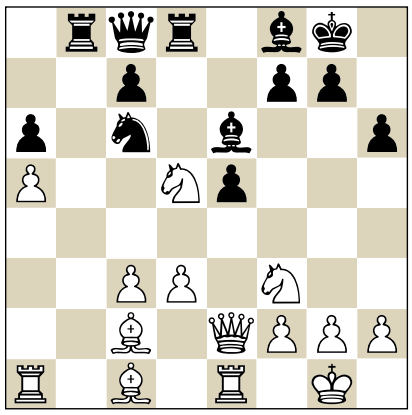
d5 looks good for Black, and indeed it shouldn't be bad, although White has ideas of his own, for example 19.c4!?, hoping to establish the knight on d5.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Now the real fun starts: 19...dxe4 20.dxe4 ♗xh3!?, and well, it's a long story. To sum up in modern language: Houdini 3, depth 20, 0.23 ☺.

17...d5! 18.exd5 ♘xd5 19.♘xd5



19...♖xd5?

It's surprising that Magnus fails to spot a cheap tactic, his speciality. He must have been satisfied with this move, too, though.

After 19...♗xd5! the e5-pawn is taboo: 20.♘xe5 ♘xe5 21.♕xe5 ♖e8! 22.♕xe8 ♕g4!.

20.h3?

This comes a move too late, but it's an understandable desire to sort of try to come back in the game and make the right move after all.

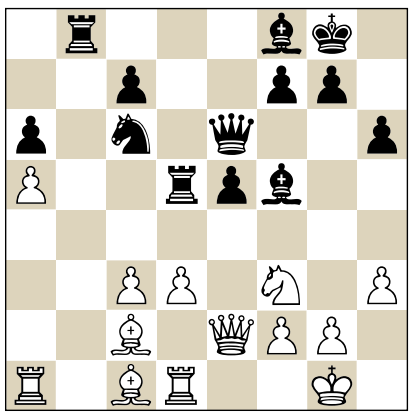
The machine finds a sophisticated way to make a useful move: 20.♕e4! f5 21.♕e2, and White's position has improved. He can even fight for an advantage, now that Black's centre has become somewhat vulnerable.

20.♕e4 was difficult to spot, but basically any other move wouldn't have been much worse than 20.h3.

20...♗f5!

The start of a nice regrouping. Now Magnus is in the driving seat and that's where he feels good.

21.♖d1 ♕e6!



It's clear that sooner or later the a5-pawn will fall.

22.♗b1 ♕d7 23.♗e3

Garry Kasparov

'Those who say that Magnus will win easily against Anand are doing him a great disservice.'

He had said it would be a whole new ball game and he saw his expectations confirmed. After the mind-boggling finale in London, Garry Kasparov shared his thoughts with us. About Carlsen's miraculous escape to the World Championship match, Kramnik's 'best tournament of his life', and of course, Ivanchuk. 'If Vassily shows his real strength, you don't want to play him that day.'

'I wouldn't say Magnus' collapse at the end was natural, but there was huge pressure and he never played a game of his life before. That's what I said before the tournament, do you remember? It was the first time he faced a situation where he must win. It's not that you can blow a game and come back next month for another tournament. It was something that could decide his fate. It was a huge challenge and he survived, by miracle, but it should be a lesson. That the World Championship match will not be an easy walk.

'His last victories actually didn't serve him well, because he lost his sense of danger. It happens with everybody, especially with the young. You feel invincible. And it started so well for him. But he was lucky. Certainly the game he drew against Radjabov was a big boost, because he was absolutely lost by move 20 with white. After that game he believed that he was invincible. And

then it comes, first Ivanchuk and then Svidler.

'I think that against Svidler he pushed too hard. I believed that Ivanchuk wouldn't lose the final game (against Kramnik). No way. Vassily played the game of his life, a game that could decide about his reputation. He has a sense of honour and he recognized what was at stake. If he loses on time in this game, if he loses badly, his reputation would be ruined. And he played to win. He played like Vassily. I've known him for 25 years and I had no doubts that he wouldn't lose and moreover that he might beat Kramnik, because he believed he had to compensate Carlsen for the loss. You can hardly criticize Vassily for the last round, because he played a very, very good game.

'Which, by the way, highlighted the problem of the tournament, and I said it all along: you must end the tournament with the number one playing the number two in a set match of, say six games. Depending on the gap. If the gap at the end between numbers one and two is more than one point you might let the number one proceed straight (to the World Championship match). But in case of a smaller gap, one point, half a point or a tie, you must have the number one (in case of a tie, the number one according to the tiebreak rules) playing number two. And the winner has draw odds. No rapid or anything. Because now everything depended on one game. On Vassily or 'Vassily'. It could be anyone, but he is the best example. Some games he plays at a 2300 level and quite a few he played at 2900 level (laughs).

'By these rules Kramnik and Magnus would have played a match of six games with Magnus having draw odds. But actually I don't like the number of wins as a tiebreaker, I would prefer Sonneborn-Berger. But whatever the tiebreak rules, one of them will have draw odds. You should avoid these unfortunate situations where 'Vassily' can be the kingmaker.'

I probably wasn't the only one who got the feeling that Ivanchuk was here for two games, to beat Magnus. Just like in the old days it often seemed as if only the games against you counted.

'Absolutely. Eventually he got Kramnik also as a victim. Actually Vassily won two mini-matches, against Magnus and Kramnik (laughs). You could see what happened after the game with Svidler (the game Ivanchuk lost in Round 13 after he had beaten Carlsen in Round 12 – DJtG). The Internet was full of accusations. All these lousy comments about Vassily being a patzer and ruining Magnus' chances. He heard it and he was ready to fight. And again, maybe the young players don't understand, but if Vassily shows his real strength, you don't want to play him that day. Kramnik learned it, a very painful lesson.'

'The match is for Magnus to lose, clearly, but it's a 12-game match, and whatever you've got from the first 9 games may not count.'

What is your assessment of Kramnik's performance?

'I think he played, some say one of the best tournaments in his life, I would say the best tournament of his life. If you exclude the last round. Very refreshing. He definitely worked really hard, he came back with a very unusual fighting spirit for Kramnik. I should applaud it. At age 37 he made a huge effort to introduce a brand-new Kramnik, which included some great elements of his youth. A very impressive performance. That's why I think he deserved to play a match with Magnus. And Magnus actually had to go through this match with Vladimir because this tournament decided no winner.

'Also I don't like the number of wins as a tiebreaker. Because it basically also means the number of losses. The number of wins is maybe good for a Swiss or a round-robin where you have a bunch of weak players. And I have to say that reintroducing the old time control without increment was a disaster. I don't like the increments, but if you play by these rules all the time, all year round, then you can't have the biggest tournament of the year with the old rules. It shows the complete incompetence of FIDE in organizing events. You can't do this. It killed Ivanchuk, it killed Grischuk. Because they are used to play with a different time control. You can't change the rules from one tournament to another.'

Magnus said that in the first eleven rounds he showed the best chess and that that was the reason why he deserved to win. Do you agree?

'No, I don't think so. First of all I don't think you can say 'the first eleven rounds of the tournament'. It's like someone saying we played the best soccer in the first 85 minutes. Congratulations. You have to play 14 rounds, and what he did in the first 11 rounds is irrelevant. As for the quality, personally I think he could have done better.

Look at the first game against Radjabov. OK, Radjabov didn't win, but you know, I think this game actually killed Aronian. Because Aronian was much better with Grischuk. I think Aronian was just watching this game and he collapsed after he saw Magnus escape. He is not very stable psychologically, and that killed him.

'Also, you look at Magnus' game against Grischuk in Round 4. Grischuk lost this game with two moves, 17…f5 and 18…♕g6. Either 17…♕g6 or 17…c5 and Magnus' assessment of his play could be different.'

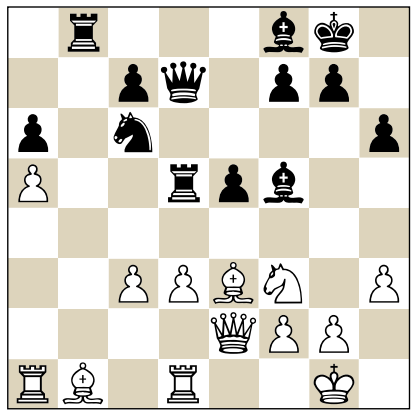
Does Aronian's performance come as a surprise to you?

'I always said that Aronian is psychologically unstable. For me it was all very natural. Again, I think the Radjabov game killed him. It's difficult for him to live under such pressure. Clearly there is something missing.'

Now many think that Magnus will easily beat Anand. What do you expect?

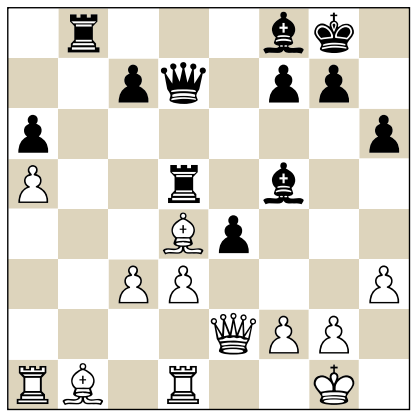
'There is no such thing as an easy win against the World Champion. I think Vishy will be quite happy that he is the underdog. He's got huge experience. And again, look at the way Magnus finished the tournament. There are problems, there are still clear problems. In a match that will be the very last line of defence. He will have to perform. And if you look at the score in London, he scored against the bottom of the table. There is no bottom of the table in a match. The match is for him to lose, clearly, but it's a 12-game match, and whatever you've got from the first 9 games may not count.

'He has to work on a lot. Psychological preparation. His opening preparation should be more precise. Anand is an expert. Those who say that Magnus will win easily are doing him a great disservice. It's all or nothing and that's a big challenge. The psychological pressure will just grow every month and he will have to learn how to cope with it.' (DJtG) ■



23...e4! 24.♘d4 ♘xd4 25.♗xd4?!

25.cxd4 is bad as well: 25...exd3 26.♗xd3 ♗xd3 27.♕xd3 ♖bb5, and White will lose the pawn.

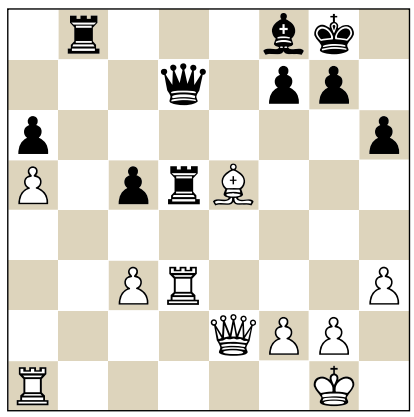


25...exd3?!

This is good enough for a clear advantage, but Magnus missed a spectacular opportunity here.

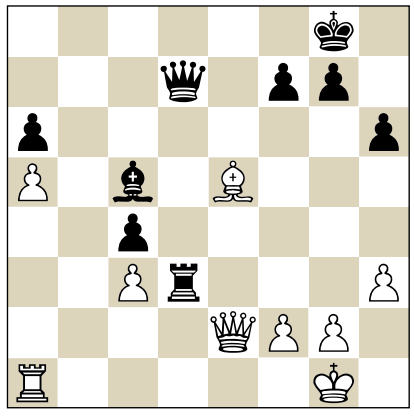
25...♗xh3! was even more devastating: 26.dxe4 ♖g5 27.g3 ♗g4 28.f3 ♖b2! 29.♕xb2 ♗xf3, but this line is not for mortals.

26.♗xd3 ♗xd3 27.♖xd3 c5 28.♗e5



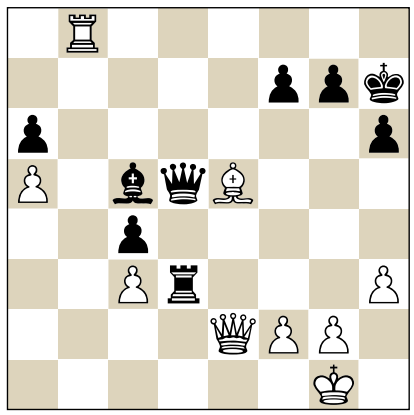
This was Peter's idea, but it doesn't bring much relief.

28...♖xd3 29.♗xb8 c4! 30.♗e5 ♗c5



The black pieces dominate, and in view of Svidler's time-trouble, White's collapse was only a matter of time.

31.♖b1 ♕d5 32.♖b8+ ♔h7

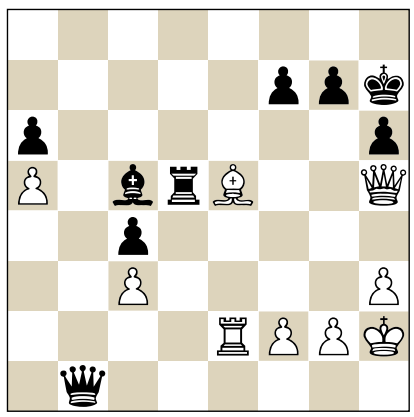


33.♕h5 It is an understandable desire to set a devilish trap, but Magnus is cold as an ice-cream.

33.♖e8! was the only way to keep the game going, but it's sad anyway: 33...♕d7 34.♗d4 ♗xd4 35.cxd4 ♖xd4, and White is fighting, but the odds are still against him.

33...♕e4! Simultaneously protecting against the mate and threatening mate himself. It's done and dusted.

34.♖b2 ♖d5! 35.♖e2 ♕b1+ 36.♔h2



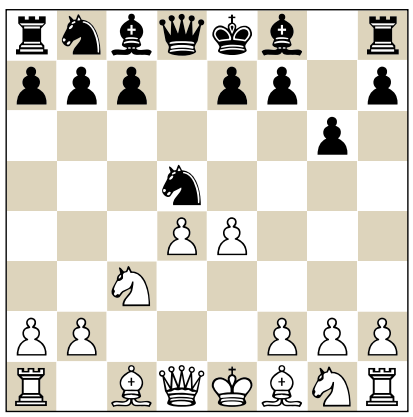
36...f6

Piece. Game. Lead. White resigned.

NOTES BY
Jan Timman

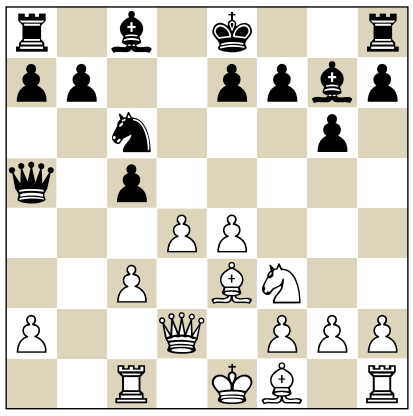
GI 4.9 – D85
Vladimir Kramnik
Peter Svidler
London 2013 (8)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4. cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4



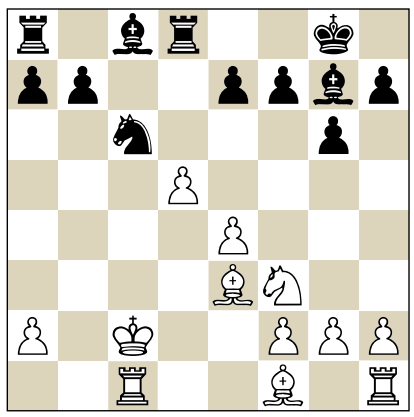
The Grünfeld Indian has been popular amongst top players of late, and it was duly played a few times in London. It is striking how few white players go for the most principled way to fight it: the Exchange Variation. In this game, Kramnik shows that new ideas can be found even in over-familiar positions

5...♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♘f3 c5 8. ♗e3 ♕a5 9.♕d2 ♘c6 10.♖c1



10...cxd4 11.cxd4 ♕xd2+ 12.♔xd2 0-0 13.d5 ♖d8 14.♔c2

The well-established move is 14.♔e1, which has been played in hundreds of games. Kramnik later stated that he had already prepared the text for his match against Kasparov in 2000, but decided not to use it. But even then the move was not new, incidentally.

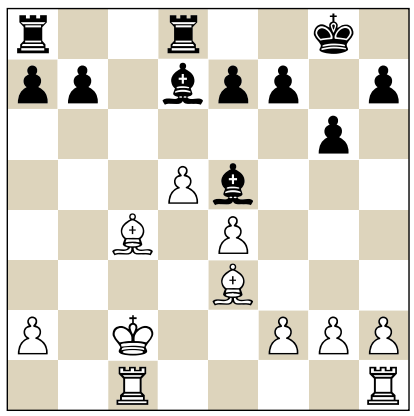


14...♘e5

After a long think Black decides to jump towards the centre. The alternative was 14...♘a5, as was played in Heinig-Gauglitz, Fürstenwalde 1981. That game never drew much attention, because after 15.♘d2 ♗d7 16.♔b1 e6 White found himself in a worse position. Kramnik was planning to handle things differently, of course. A good alternative is 15.♗g5, intending to meet 15...f6 with 16. ♗d2, with advantage. Better again is 15...♔f8, or even the pawn sac 15... ♗d7, as Svidler suggested afterwards. I believe that Kasparov, at any rate, would have gone for 14...♘a5.

The text plays into Kramnik's hand. He gets a slight but solid plus, allowing him to try and convert into a win without running any risks.

15.♘xe5 ♗xe5 16.♗c4 ♗d7



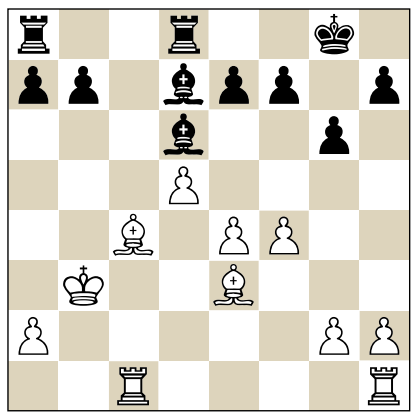
17.f4 Of course. White increases his influence in the centre with tempo.

17...♗d6

The best square for the bishop. From here it can sortie to a3, if required.

18.♔b3

Opening the c-file for the rook and also controlling square a3.



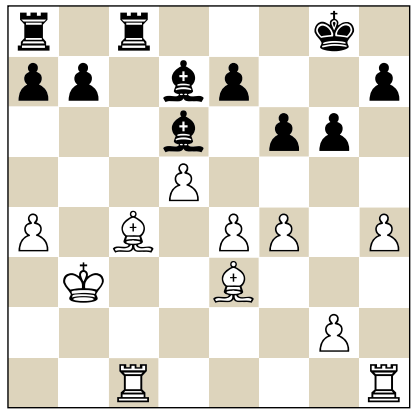
18...f6 Better was 18...b5 to gain space on the queenside. After 19.♗d3 f6 20.g3 a5 21.♗c5 White would retain some advantage.

19.a4

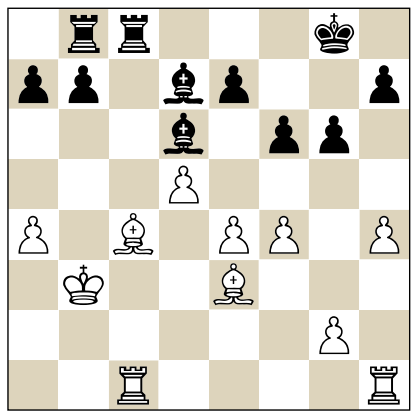
Preventing 19...b5 and creating the possibility of a bishop sortie to b5.

19...♖dc8 20.h4

Play on both wings. White wants to advance his h-pawn further and open a second front on the kingside.



20...♖ab8 Svidler prepares 21...b5 in order to create counterplay on the queenside. The alternative was 20... h5, after which Kramnik had planned 21.g3. Then he will take his bishop to d4 in preparation for the advance of his e-pawn. Black cannot afford to sit back and watch.



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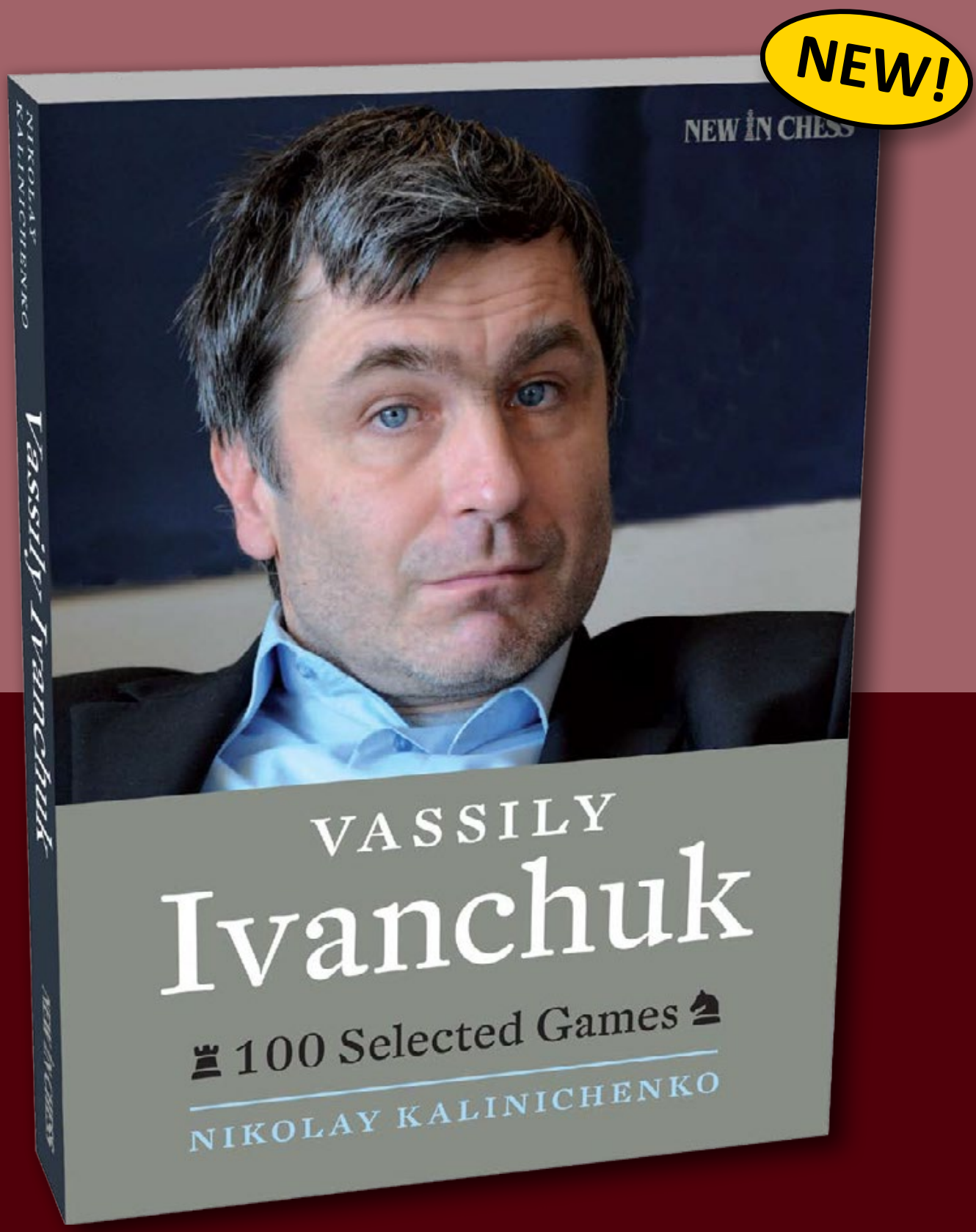

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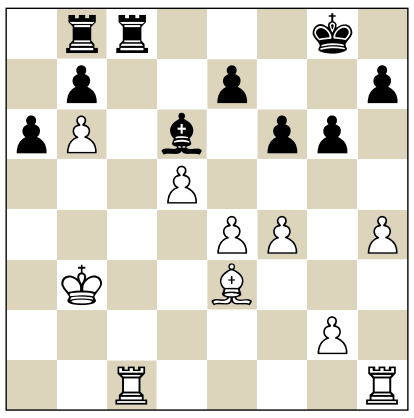
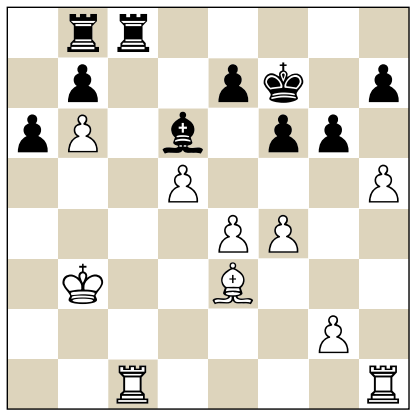
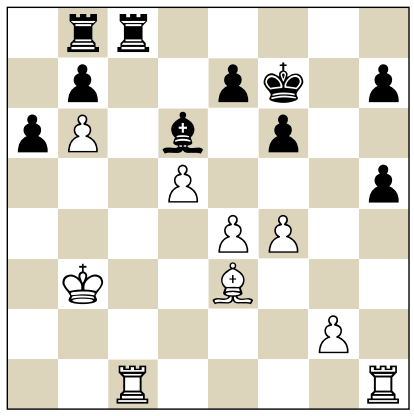
21.♗b5!
Forcing a bishop swap in favourable circumstances. Black's counterplay on the queenside is being contained.
21...♗xb5 22.axb5 a6 23.b6!
Keeping the queenside closed, while White gains additional space. The drawback of the text is that the b-pawn may become weak. Kramnik has seen that he will be able to sacrifice the pawn, if necessary, in order to set his mighty centre moving again.



23...♔f7
Black wants to take his king to the centre and allows the advance of the h-pawn. Afterwards, Svidler observed that he was afraid that his king would be cut off after 23...h5 24.♖hf1, as 24...♔f7 could be met very strongly by 25.e5. But there was no need to fear this possibility. After 23...h5 24.♖hf1 ♖xc1 25.♗xc1 ♗c5 26.♗a3 ♗xa3 27.♔xa3 ♖c8 Black controls the only open file, putting paid to any white winning chances.
Far stronger is 24.g3, again to prepare 25.♗d4 and 25.e5. After 24...♔f7 25.♗d4 Black must play 25...e5 to prevent himself from being encircled. White continues with 26.fxe5 fxe5 27.♗e3 and retains a lasting positional advantage. The position is so fixed that Black will have a hard time defending. This is why there is nothing wrong with the text.
24.h5



24...♖xc1
Svidler later thought that he should have played 24...gxh5 here, exactly as he had originally planned, and it's true that White then has no way to create a clear endgame advantage. This was very hard to foresee, however. Play could then continue as follows:

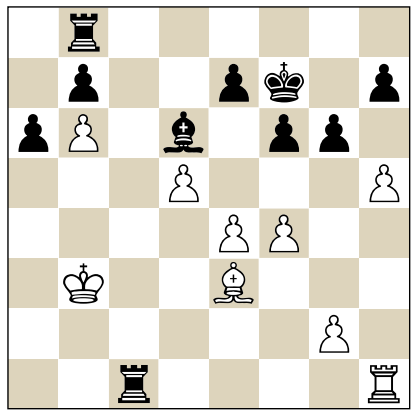


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

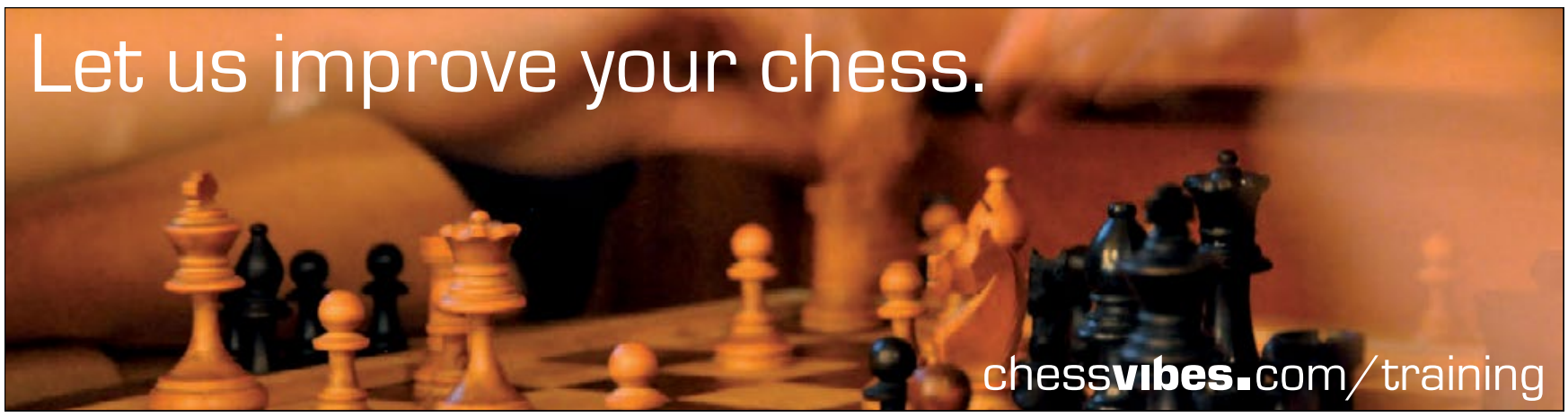
A) 25.♖ce1. This was the move Svidler was afraid of. The idea is that White goes all out to force the advance e4-e5. But Black can maintain a dynamic balance with 25...a5!;

B) 25.♖xh5. This is what Kramnik had planned. After 25...♖xc1 26.♗xc1 he wanted to force the crucial advance e4-e5 in a different way. Black has a very narrow road to the draw here: 26...♖g8 27.e5 fxe5 28.fxe5 ♖g3+! 29.♔c4 ♖g4+! 30.♔d3 ♗c5 31.♗e3 ♗xe3 32.♔xe3 ♔g6, and Black will be able to hold;

C) 25.♖xc8 ♖xc8 26.♖xh5. This is probably White's best practical chance. After 26...♔g6 27.g4 ♗c5 28.f5+ ♔g7 29.♗h6+ ♔g8 30.g5! Black will continue to be beset by problems.



25.hxg6+
An important intermediate move.
25...♔xg6
The best way to recapture. It is important that there are two half-open files besides the open c-file: the g- and h-files. After 25...hxg6 26.♗xc1 Black is tied to preventing the white rook from penetrating along the h-file, which dooms him to passivity. In addition, the position contains an



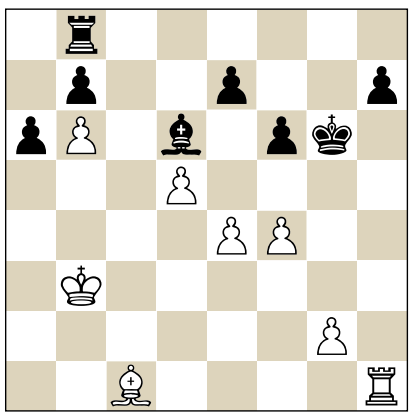
RAY MORRIS-HILL

Peter Svidler called his loss against Vladimir Kramnik 'a typical Kramnik-Svidler game. If I get out of the opening semi-alive, I might do OK, if I don't...'

important tactical turn: 26...♔g7 is met strongly by 27.e5 fxe5 28.♗b2, followed by 29.fxe5.

Remarkably enough, Kramnik assessed the position after 25...hxg6 as winning for White, whereas the computer only sees a slight advantage. It seems to me that Kramnik was right here.

26.♗xc1



26...♖g8?

Svidler's only demonstrable – and also decisive – error in the game. Black anticipates the advance of the f-pawn, but White has a far better move. Alternatives were:

A) 26...h5 27.f5+ ♔f7 28.♗a3! ♗xa3 29.♔xa3 ♔g7 30.♖xh5 ♖c8 31.♖h3!, and White has very good chances in the rook ending. But not 28.♖xh5 at once in view of 28...♖g8, and Black has sufficient counterplay;

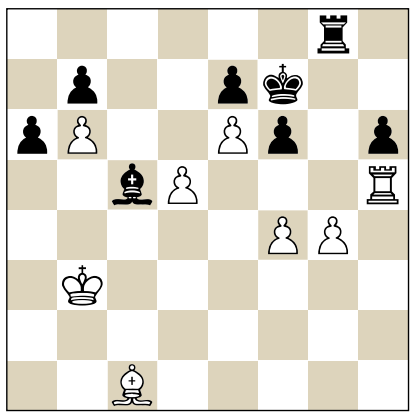
B) 26...♖c8. The most natural move and the best one. Black occupies the open file in order to prevent a liquidation to a rook ending. Now 27.♗d2 can be met by 27...h5 after all. Black's disadvantage remains manageable.

27.g4! The ideal way to reinforce the position.

27...h6 28.♖h5

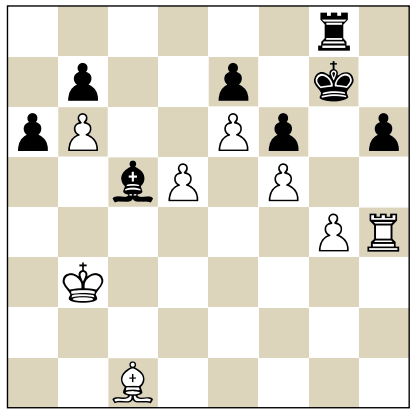
White always had to take the bishop to the long diagonal in preparation of the advance e4-e5. Now he can do it with the help of the rook.

28...♔f7 29.e5 ♗c5 30.e6+



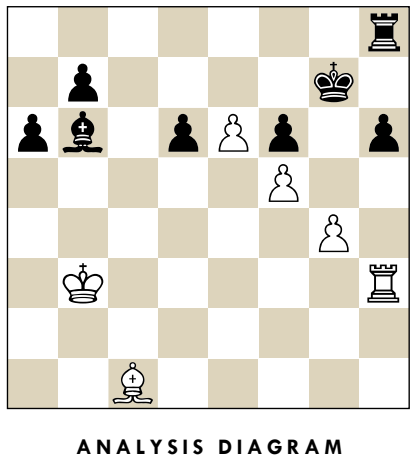
Black is encircled. **30...♔f8 31.♖h4 ♔g7** Black continues to mount a passive defence. 31...h5 32.gxh5 ♖g1 33.♔c2! would not yield him sufficient counterplay either.

32.f5



32...♖d8

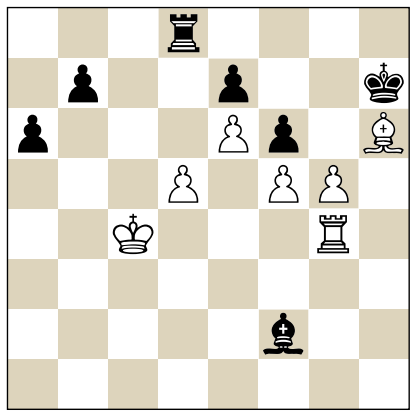
32...♖h8 would have been met coolly by 33.♖h3, the point being 33...♗xb6 34.d6! exd6



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

35.♗xh6+ ♔g8 36.g5, and White creates two connected passed pawns that will quickly decide the issue.

33.♗xh6+ ♔g8 34.♔c4 ♗xb6 35.g5 ♗f2 36.♖g4 ♔h7



37.gxf6 exf6 38.e7

Also 38.♗g7 would have won.

38...♖c8+ 39.♔b3 ♗c5 40.♖c4

Black resigned.

An impressive victory by Kramnik, in which space advantage and central domination were the central themes.

NOTES BY
Anish Giri

QO 1.5 – D37
Boris Gelfand
Levon Aronian
London 2013 (9)

Before this game the tournament situation was very different for both players. Levon was sharing the lead, while Boris had just managed to come back into the race somewhat by winning his first game, against Radjabov.

1.d4

I see Boris as an extremely principled player who tries to play the same chess whatever the situation and whoever his opponent. A surprise is something one shouldn't be expecting from him.

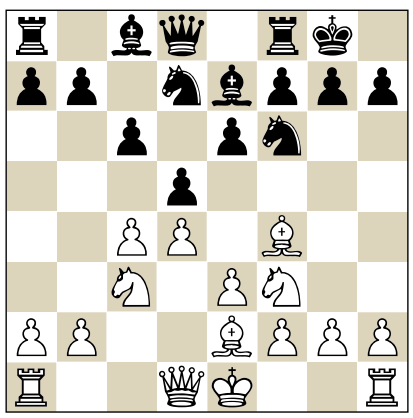
1...♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗e7

A solid choice, but I have the feeling that with Levon you never know what to expect. He may seem to be equalizing, but then suddenly change his mind and go all-in.

5.♗f4 0-0 6.e3 ♘bd7 7.♗e2

Personally, I have had very painful experiences in this line. I still can't explain how on earth White can lose in such an ultra-solid line, but my two losses (against the same Aronian, and Topalov) speak for themselves.

7...c6 I would be curious to see how Gelfand refined the solid main line (7...dxc4 8.0-0 c5 etc.), but Aronian is always trying to find his own way. Against me, for example, he managed to confuse me by misplacing all of his knights and later on winning in spectacular style.



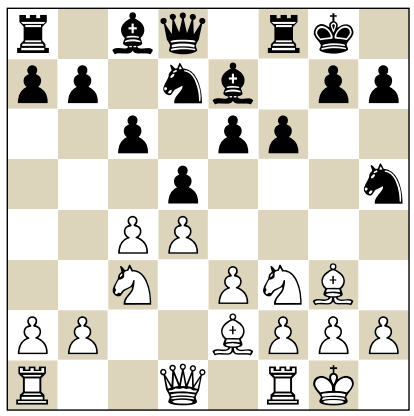
8.0-0 I have the feeling that Levon wasn't really expecting this move. Somehow I would expect Boris to preserve the bishop with 8.h3.

However, 8.h3 gives Black one more tempo to use before White completes his development. Possible ways to exploit it lie somewhere after the dynamic 8...dxc4!? 9.♗xc4, and now either the Slav-style ...b5/...a6 or the Queen's Indian-style ...♘d5xc3, followed by ...c5.

8...♘h5 This was obviously the idea.

9.♗e5!? White has to compromise Black's pawn structure, otherwise he has given up the bishop for nothing.

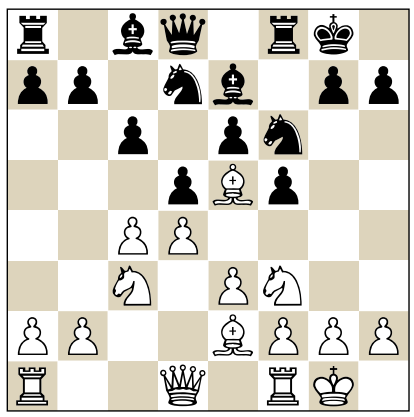
9...f6 10.♗g3



10...f5

10...♘xg3 11.hxg3 f5 is another way of playing. I can't really say what's going on here. The structure clearly favours White, but the absence of the bishop and the fact that the h-file is open (which is absolutely irrelevant to cool-headed people, but that's not what I am...) would play on my nerves a little.

11.♗e5 ♘hf6



12.h3 This move forces Black to take the bishop.

I would think about continuing the bishop dance with 12.♗f4!?. I don't know what Black would do now with his knight. Still try to haunt the bishop or be happy that he has won a tempo on f5 and play Stonewall-style with ...♘e4 ? Personally I think the second option makes more sense.

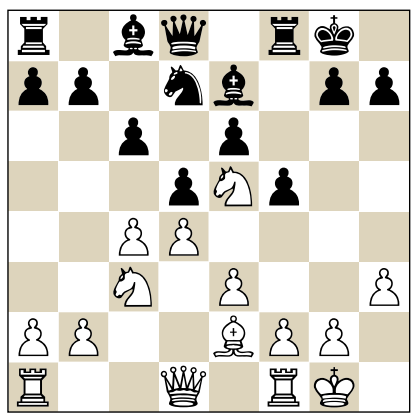
After 12...♘h5 I really don't like Black's position. All he wants is to take on f4, but then he is left with a typical position in which White does have the e5-square while Black doesn't have

> 'I know that if I suggest this when Boris Abramovich is around, he will stop talking to me. Forever.'

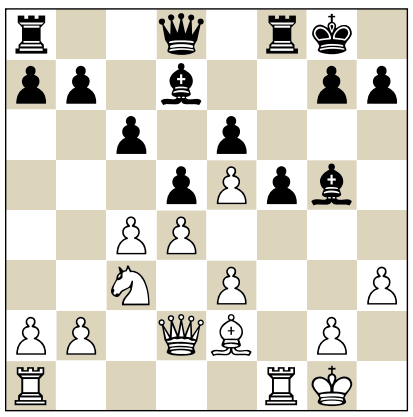
his e4-square, as White can always go f2-f3. Since it's the fashion to refer to the classics these days, I can refer you to a game of Rubinstein in which he took the absolutely remarkable decision of giving up the e5-knight for the 'bad' bishop on d7, and even though they always put two exclams to it, I have the feeling I will just never get the idea.

On the other hand, 12...♘e4!? makes more sense. Now it's a long game, after let's say 13.h3 to make sure the poor bishop will finally have some peace. I would bet on White here, though.

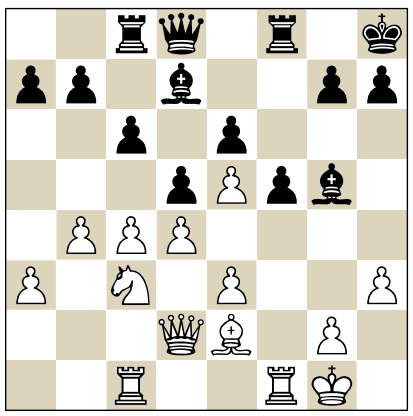
12...♘xe5 13.♘xe5 ♘d7



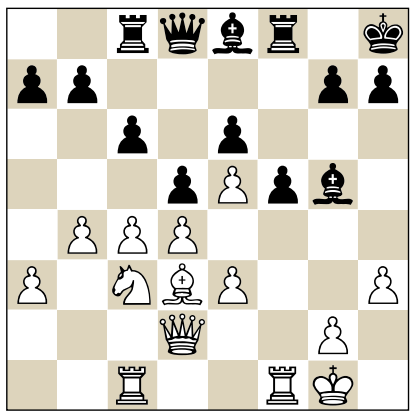
14.f4
Boris fixes the structure without any doubts. I am not sure what is going on, but then again, who is?
14.♘f3 keeps things more flexible, but you cannot call this principled.
14...♘xe5 15.fxe5 ♗g5 16.♕d2 ♗d7



At this point I didn't see anything wrong with Black's position. Especially because I had some commentary switched on and heard the clever idea of ...♗h6!?, followed by bringing the queen out, and it all sounded interesting.
17.♖ac1 ♖c8
A bit mysterious, but as we will see later on, Black has an interesting regrouping in mind with ...♖c7-d7 (did I just sound sarcastic?).
17...♗h6!?, followed by 18...♕h4, is a nice idea, although if White is a bit cautious and plays, for example, 18.♔h2!? ♕g5 19.♖f3, I don't know what I have achieved really.
18.a3 ♔h8 This can't be bad.
19.b4



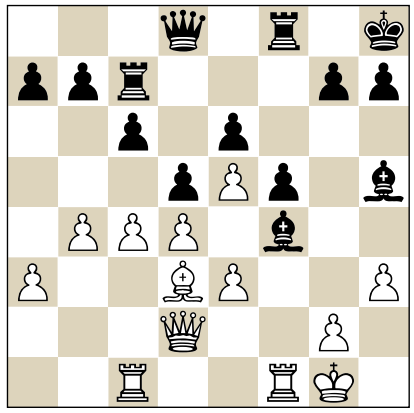
19...♗e8
This was the last chance to disturb White with 19...♗h6!?, but I can understand Levon, who tries a positional regrouping instead of one-move semi-threats.
20.♗d3



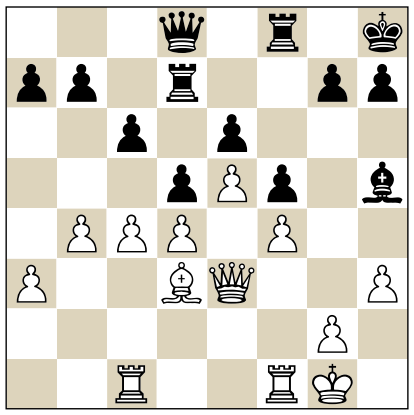
20...♖c7
I would think about 20...♗h5, with the idea 21.♘e2 ♗xe2!?, as somehow it is more logical to get rid of this bishop and keep the one eyeing the e3-pawn alive. But I am not enough of a strategic genius to tell you what is supposed to happen.
The cyber-way of playing is 20...dxc4 21.♗xc4 ♗f7, and I know that if I suggest this when Boris Abramovich is around, he will stop talking to me. Forever.
21.♘e2
A very healthy regrouping.

'Boris Gelfand is an extremely principled player who tries to play the same chess whatever the situation and whoever his opponent.'

21...♗h5 22.♘f4 ♗xf4



23.exf4
This game is quite remarkable from a strategic point of view. The structure changes once again. Don't be deceived by the structure, though. While it may seem that White has everything under control, he should always keep the ...g7-g5! advance in mind.
23.♖xf4 allows interesting counterplay in the form of 23...g5!? 24.♖ff1 g4.
23...♖d7 24.♕e3! A very strong positional move. White needs to keep the tension in the centre.
24.c5 would be premature and antipositional because of 24...♖g8! and the above-mentioned ...g5 is quite bothersome.



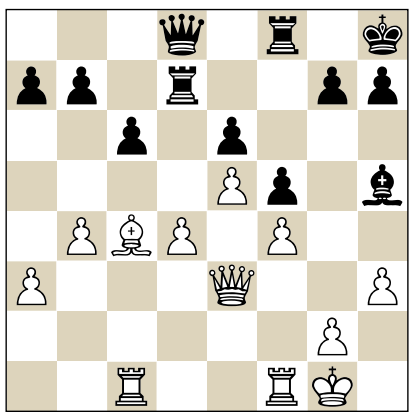
24...dxc4

It is always hard to say something about moves aiming for a certain sequence that turns out to contain a blunder. But anyhow, Black doesn't have an easy way of clarifying the situation. I am not saying he is much worse, but I just don't see anything simple.

24...♖g8 now fails to 25.cxd5!, while ...g5 makes much less sense once the c-file is open.

24...♖e8 is very clever. Now 25.c5 would again be met by 25...♖g8, but White can also try to be clever, for example 25.b5!?.

25.♗xc4



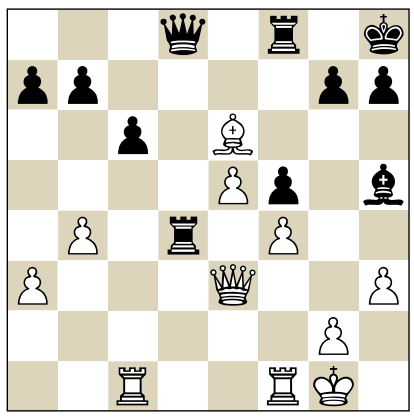
25...♖xd4?

This is connected with a blunder.

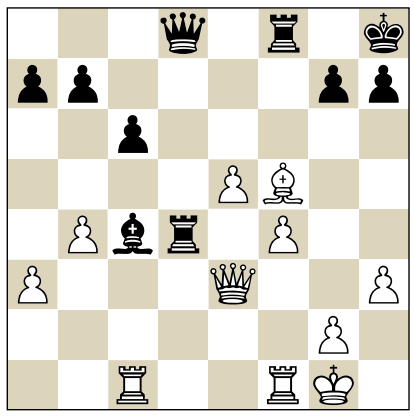
25...♖e8 was the most principled move. Now White has a very strong idea: 26.d5! exd5 27.♗d3, and White has definitely more than enough compensation. His pawn structure is just superior. Philidor's games come to mind (remember that classics fashion?), where he kept giving away pawns to get his two passers ahead no matter what.

25...♕e7 keeps the pressure on the d4-pawn. Now White can protect it with ♖f2-d2 and enjoy some advantage, I believe. The game still goes on, though.

26.♗xe6



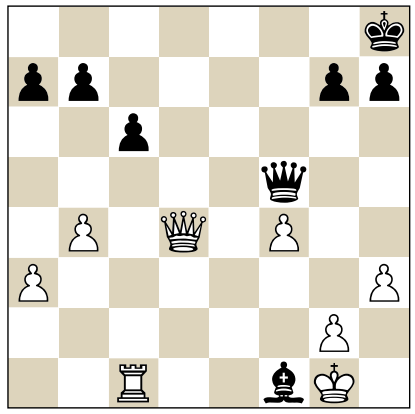
26...♗f7? 27.♗xf5 ♗c4



28.e6!

Levon must have missed this shot. I guess he just got tired. In fact, from this point onwards he seemed very shaky, missing more stuff and showing his disappointment with his body language.

28...♕d6 28...♗xf1 certainly loses: 29.e7 ♕e8 30.exf8♕+ ♕xf8 31.♕xd4 ♕xf5, and now



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

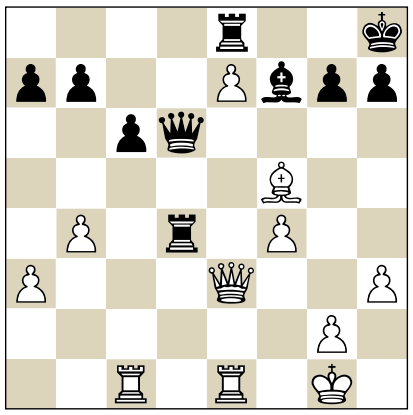
32.♕d8+ is a little detail, as the living legend of Dutch chess, Loek van Wely, says in such cases.

29.♖fe1 ♖e8 30.e7 ♗f7

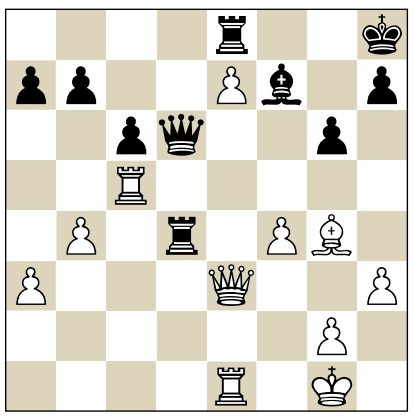
It's still not easy for White, though. His advanced pawn may prove to be a weakness in an endgame.

RAY MORRIS-HILL

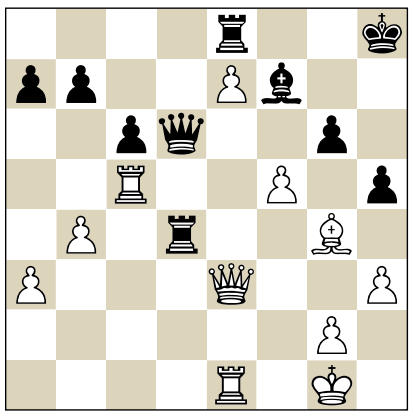
Chess Casting in action. While watching the grandmasters, the spectators at the IET could follow the games with live commentary on tablet computers.



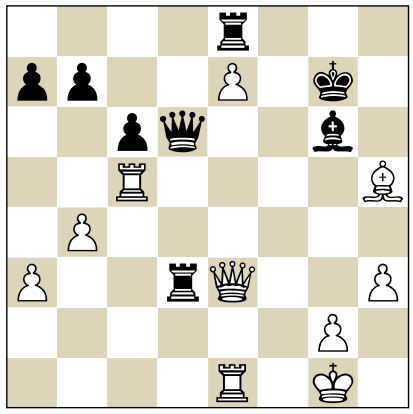
31.♖c5 31.♗g4!?, with the idea of 32.♖cd1!, is quite strong, but in time-trouble Boris was obviously operating with more straightforward ideas.
31...g6 32.♗g4



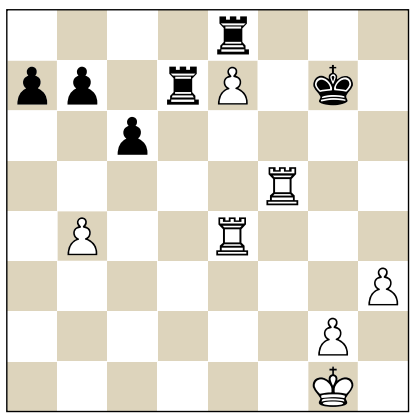
32...h5? By now Levon was just gone. 32...♖d3 would have still kept the fight going: 33.♕e5+ ♕xe5 34.♖cxe5 ♔g7, and I'd say it's fifty-fifty. The e7-pawn is as hard to take as it is to queen. Black may be hoping for a two vs. three endgame, which could be quite realistic given that White has to take some very important decisions in the coming few moves (in time-trouble!).
33.f5!



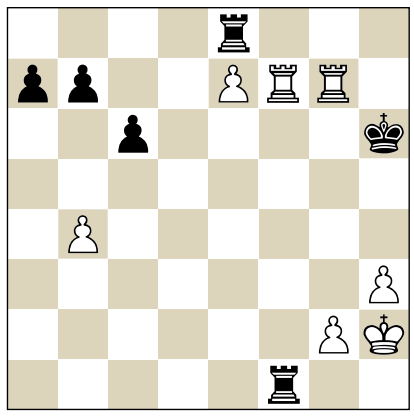
A killing blow. On top of the e7-pawn Black also gets problems with his king.
33...♔g7 If 33...hxg4 then 34.♕h6+ ♔g8 35.fxg6 ♗xg6 36.♖g5.
34.fxg6 ♗xg6 35.♗xh5 ♖d3



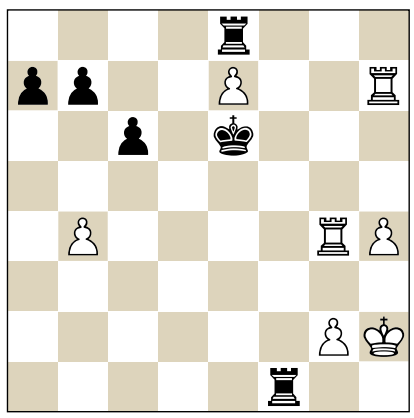
36.♕e5+?
I wouldn't blame Gelfand too much for this one, as in the ensuing endgame he compensated fully for this, demonstrating great technique.
36.♕g5 is totally winning. After 36...♖g3 there is a slightly peculiar but very powerful move: 37.♕h4!. This is the easiest, but just to show the limit of White's advantage (which doesn't exist) I propose 37.♔h1!!.
36...♕xe5 37.♖cxe5 ♗xh5 38.♖xh5 ♖xa3 39.♖f5! ♖d3 40.♖e4 ♖d7 I don't know if Gelfand had already seen the following manoeuvre, but when I was watching the game live I thought for a second that he had blown it...
40...♖d6 41.h4 ♖f6 42.♖fe5 is also bad for Black. His problem is that his queenside is incredibly immobile.



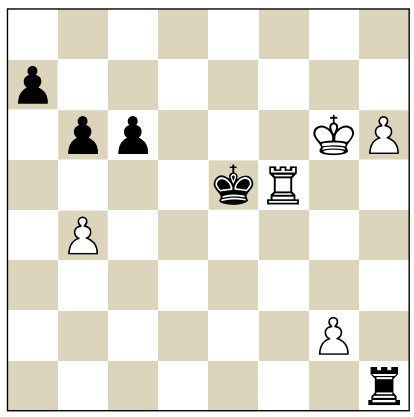
41.♖g4+ ♔h6 42.♖f6+ ♔h7 43.♖f7+! ♔h6 44.♖gg7!
Just plainly protecting the pawn. Black is helpless.
44...♖d1+ 45.♔h2
45.♔f2!? was also possible.
45...♖f1



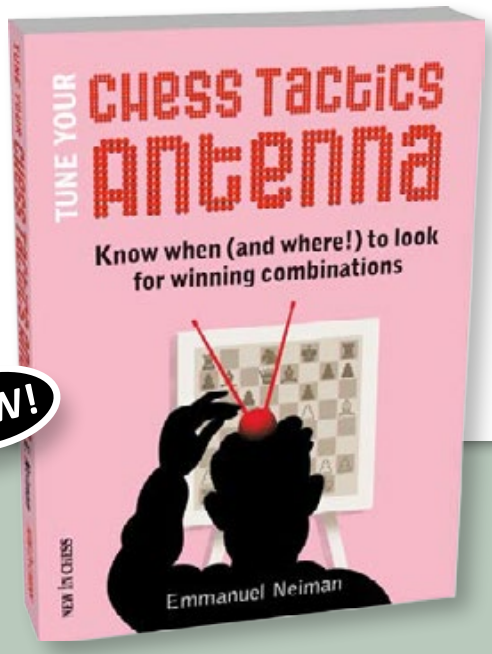
A last cheapo, but Boris had it all under control.
46.♖h7+ ♔g6 47.♖hg7+ ♔h6 48.♖h7+ ♔g6 49.♖fg7+! ♔f6 50.h4! ♔e6 51.♖g4!



Having everything protected. As I mentioned already, Black's queenside is paralysed. And look at that, by just one b4-pawn!
51...♔f5 52.♔g3 ♖e1 53.♖f4+ ♔e6 54.h5 ♖xe7 55.♖xe7+ ♔xe7 56.♔h4 b6 57.h6 ♖h1+ 58.♔g5 ♔e6 59.♔g6 ♔e5 60.♖f5+



Black resigned.
This game must have been painful for Aronian and very sweet for Boris, who returned to 50 per cent.



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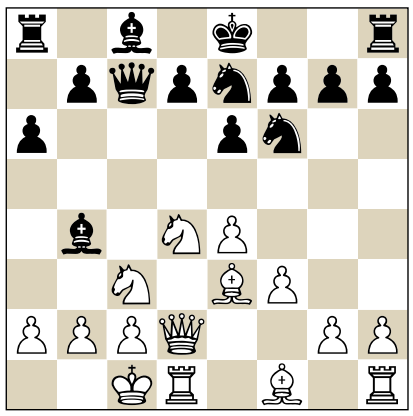
NOTES BY
Anish Giri

SI 40.2 – B48
Magnus Carlsen
Vassily Ivanchuk
London 2013 (12)

Before this game and, in fact, even during it, it was hard to imagine that Kramnik would take over the lead. But then again, the whole Candidates' final in London was beyond our imagination.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 e6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♕c7 6.♗e3 a6 7.♕d2 ♘f6 8.0-0-0 ♗b4 9.f3 ♘e7



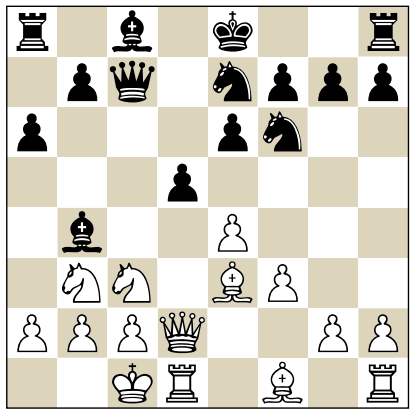
If Vassily Mikhailovich was to write a book (a voluminous novel rather) on how and why he makes his opening choices, it would become a bestseller amongst all of us professionals. This variation is somewhat forgotten, but it was quite popular at top level some years ago, until Peter Leko sat down and decided to punish the legendary Judit Polgar for her experiments at the World Championship tournament in San Luis in 2005. That game continued 10.♘de2 b5 11.g4 h6 12.♖g1 ♘g6 13.a3 ♗e7 14.f4 b4 15.axb4 ♗xb4 16.♕d4 ♕a5 17.♔b1 ♖b8 18.g5 ♘h5 19.gxh6 ♖xh6 20.♖g5 ♕c7 21.♘b5 ♖xb5 22.♖xb5 axb5 23.♕xb4 ♘hxf4 24.♘c3 ♖xh2 25.♗g1 1-0.

10.♘b3

Indeed, 10.♘de2! is the usual move. I have heard many legends about Magnus's opening erudition and memory, so let's assume he deviated deliberately.

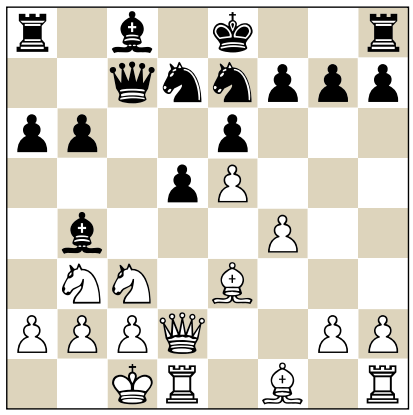
In reply to 10.♘de2, Black would probably have gone 10...b5, and I believe Ivanchuk would be well aware of all the latest developments in this line, which enjoyed a rebirth thanks to some devoted Russians.

10...d5



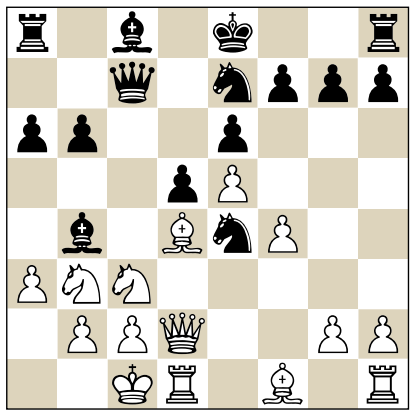
11.e5 Very often such a structural change from the Sicilian to the French is favourable for White, but in this particular position it seems that Black is well prepared for it.

11...♘d7 12.f4 b6!?



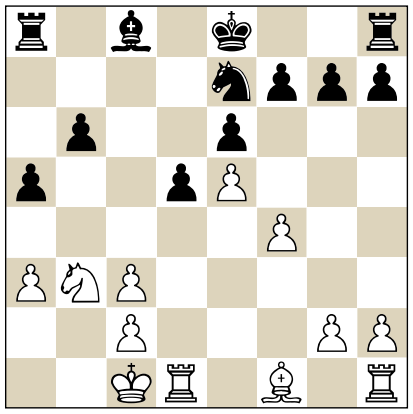
13.♗d4 13.♔b1 ♗xc3 (no need to hurry with 13...0-0!?, and 13...♘c5? allows the usual Taimanov cheapo 14.♘b5!) looks OK for Black, too: 14.♕xc3 ♕xc3 15.bxc3 a5.

13...♘c5 14.a3 ♘e4



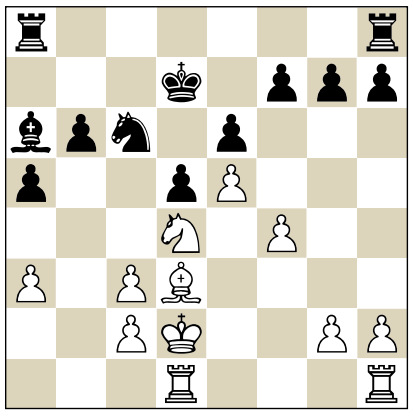
Now Black gets an endgame, and it becomes clear that the opening hasn't gone in White's favour.

15.♕e1 ♘xc3 16.♗xc3 ♗xc3 17.♕xc3 ♕xc3 18.bxc3 a5



A human concept. The engine insists on playing with the bishops on the board, hoping to exploit White's doubled pawns. However, unlike the engine I would hesitate to call it better for Black.

19.♘d4 ♗a6 20.♗d3 ♔d7 21.♔d2 ♘c6



22.♖b1

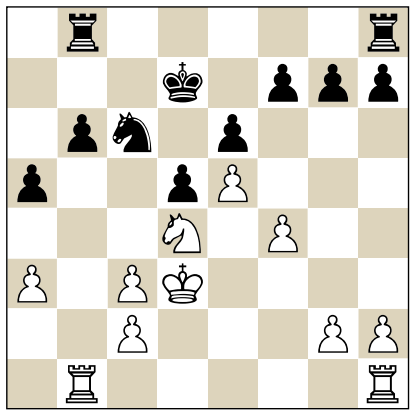
You shouldn't be fooled by the result of this game. In fact, Magnus was probably only thinking of two results. And indeed, it's hard not to think so when people just refuse to punish you sometimes...

22.♘xc6 is one of many ways for White to more or less force a draw, for instance after 22...♔xc6 23.♗xa6 ♖xa6 24.c4!.

22...♗xd3 23.♔xd3

Here 23.cxd3 is pretty risk-free for White, too: 23...♘xd4 24.cxd4 ♔c6, and Black's pawn majority is just optical; it's not going anywhere. Instead, White may go f5 himself, and while I cannot say that he is better, he is certainly quite comfortable.

23...♖ab8



24.♘b5?!

What, where, why? I think Magnus was just toying around, hoping for some tricks while thinking that if something happened, he would make a draw anyway. Makes sense.

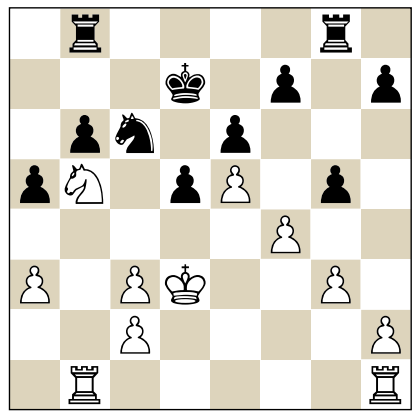
24.♖hf1 or any other random move would have kept the position very equal.

24...g5!

Now Black is on the nicer side of equality.

25.g3 ♖hg8

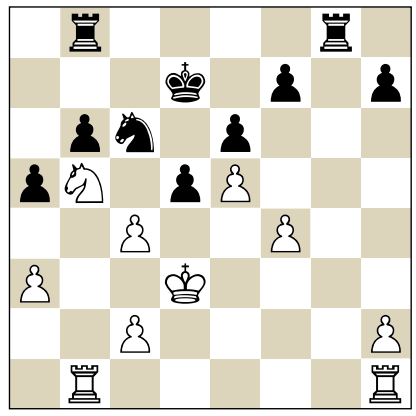
'So, who's that sitting at the other side? Vassily or "Vassily"?' Magnus Carlsen seems to wonder. It soon became clear that for Round 12 the real Ivanchuk had turned up.



26.c4!

This was White's idea, I assume.

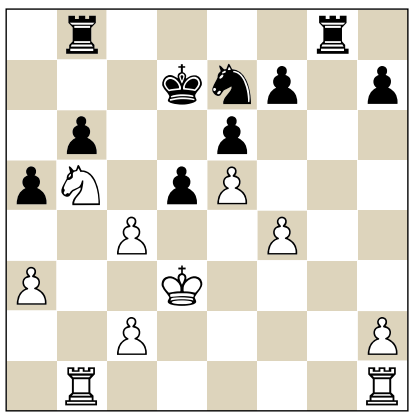
26...gxf4 27.gxf4



27...♘e7

Instead, 27...dxc4+!? was good, no need to fear ghosts: 28.♔e4! (28.♔xc4 ♖g4!) 28...♖g2 29.♖hd1+, and now

Black has to be clever: 29...♔e8! 30.♘d6+ (30.♖d6 ♘e7!) 30...♔e7 31.♘xc4, and it should still be a draw, although White will have to make a couple of good moves here and there.



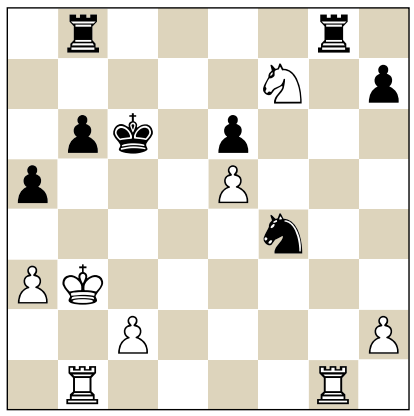
28.♖hg1?

The first real mistake. Now White gets into a bit of trouble.

A possible way to play was 28.cxd5 ♘xd5 29.♖hd1. The position is equal. Play might continue 29...♘xf4+!? 30.♔e4+ ♘d5 31.c4 ♖g4+ 32.♔d3 ♘e7 33.♔e3+ ♔c8 34.♘d6+ ♔c7 35.♘b5+ ♔c8 36.♘d6+ ♔c7, with a draw.

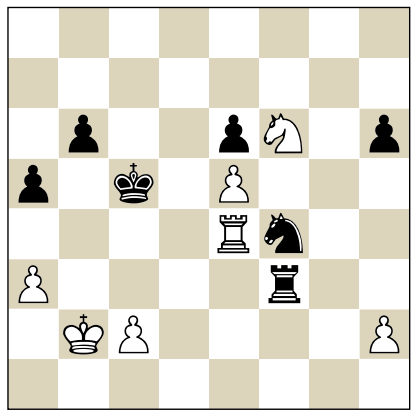
Another way was to put the rook on the d-file right away with 28.♖hd1!?, which should also lead to equality.

28...dxc4+ 29.♔xc4 ♘d5 30.♘d6 ♔c6! 31.♘xf7 ♘xf4 32.♔b3



From here on in, neither player played the most accurate moves, but the character of the game never changes: Black is pushing.

32...♔c5 33.♘g5 h6 34.♘e4+ ♔d4 35.♘f6 ♖xg1 36.♖xg1 ♖c8 37.♖e1 ♖c3+ 38.♔b2 ♖f3 39.♖e4+ ♔c5



40.♘d7+

White should have played 40.a4!, and believe it or not, this looks like zugzwang. A Magnus in good form can find this kind of move. White holds, although Black can still play on.

40...♔d5 41.♘f6+ ♔c5 42.♘d7+ ♔c6 43.♘f6 ♘g6 44.♖c4+ ♔b5

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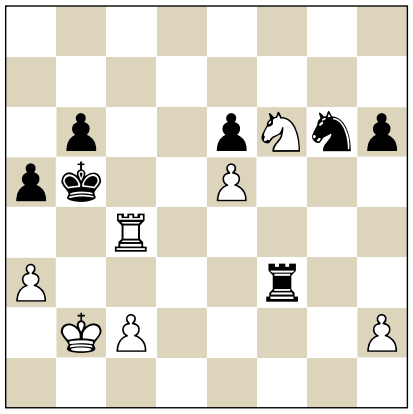
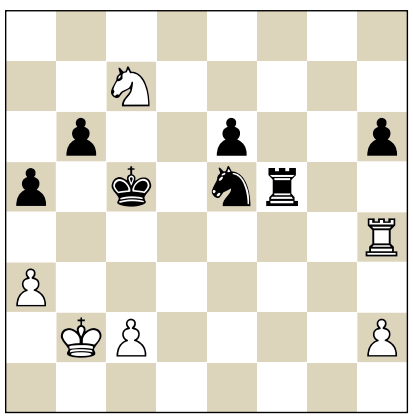


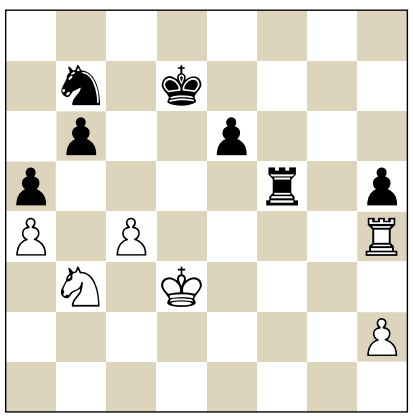
45.♖e4 The pawn on e5 was doomed anyway, so Magnus should have gone for counterplay right away with 45.♖c8! ♘xe5 46.♘e4, and as if in a study, it all works. The necessary element for this miraculous construction is 46...♘c4+ 47.♖xc4!.

45...♖f5 46.♘e8 ♔c5 47.♘c7 ♘xe5 48.♖h4



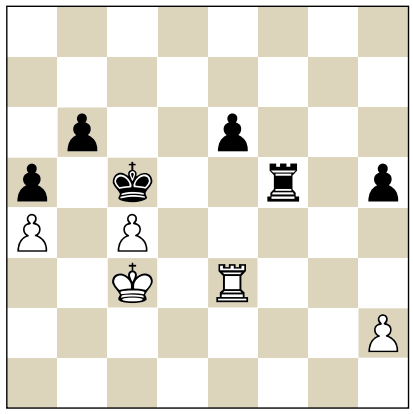
Now a new phase starts. Black is a pawn up, but Magnus keeps on fighting.

48...♔d6 49.♘b5+ ♔d7 50.a4 h5 51.♘d4 ♖g5 52.♖e4 ♘c4+ 53.♔c3 ♖e5 54.♖h4 ♘d6 55.♔d3 ♖d5 56.c4 ♖g5 57.♘f3 ♖c5 58.♘d2 ♖f5 59.♘b3 ♘b7



Black is better and also a pawn up, yet one has to be on the alert always.

60.♖h3 ♔d6 61.♔c3 ♘c5 62.♘xc5 ♔xc5 63.♖e3



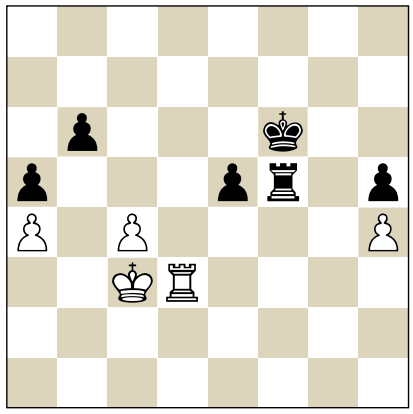
63...e5?? An uncharacteristic oversight by Ivanchuk.

63...h4! seems deadly. White is in zugzwang: 64.♖xe6 (64.h3 e5) 64...♖f3+ 65.♔c2 ♖h3!.

64.h4!

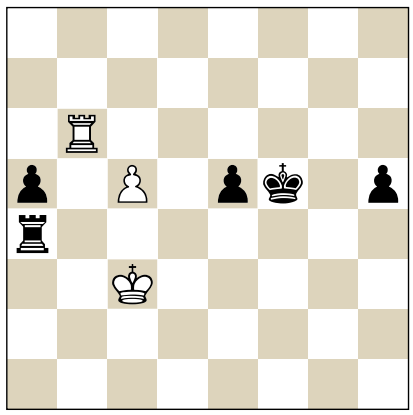
Now it's Black who is in zugzwang.

64...♔d6 65.♖d3+! ♔e6 66.♖g3! ♔f6 67.♖d3!



Of course, Magnus goes for his chance.

67...♖f4 68.♖d6+ ♔f5 69.♖xb6 ♖xh4 70.c5 ♖xa4



71.♖h6?

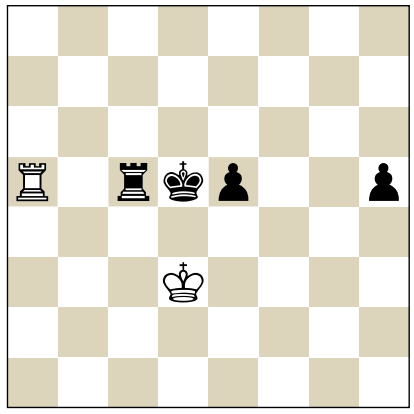
Missing 71.c6!. In the end, even the best of the best isn't a magician of ungraspable rook endgames. A real pity, as it was an excellent chance for Magnus to show the world that he is absolutely bulletproof. And now... Well, now he is just the best, no more than that.

After 71.c6! there could follow 71...♔e6 72.♖b5 ♔d6 73.♖xe5! (it feels so good to snatch this one) 73...h4 74.♔b3 ♖a1 75.♖h5 ♖h1 76.♖xa5 ♔xc6 77.♖a4 ♔d6 78.♔b2 ♔e6 79.♖c4 ♔f6 80.♖c6+ ♔g5 81.♖c5+ ♔f4 82.♖c4+, and I believe this theoretical position even has its own name somewhere on the pages of Dvoretsky's endgame book (and obviously in many others). It's a draw.

71...♔e4!

Now it's lost.

72.♖d6 ♖d4 73.♖a6 ♔d5 74.♖xa5 ♖c4+ 75.♔d3 ♖xc5



The rest is a matter of simple technique. No room for miracles anymore.

76.♖a4

After 76.♖a8 e4+ 77.♔e3 ♖c3+ 78.♔e2, White would be a tempo short: 78...h4! 79.♖d8+ ♔e5 80.♖e8+ ♔f4 81.♖f8+ ♔g3 82.♖g8+ ♔h2, and wins.

76...♖c7

An interesting alternative was 76...e4+!? 77.♖xe4 ♖c3+.

77.♖h4 ♖h7 78.♔e3 ♔e6 79.♔e4 ♖h8 80.♔e3 ♔f5 81.♔e2 ♔g5 82.♖e4 ♖e8 83.♔e3 h4 84.♔e2 h3 85.♔f2 h2 86.♔g2 h1♕+ 87.♔xh1 ♔f5 88.♖e1 ♖g8 89.♔h2 ♔f4 90.♖f1+ ♔e3

And, probably incredulous about what had just happened, the world witnessed Magnus resign.

NOTES BY
Anish Giri

KI 30.8 – E990
Levon Aronian
Teimour Radjabov
London 2013 (14)

Although Levon had already dropped out of the fight for first place, there was still a lot to play for in this last-round game.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7

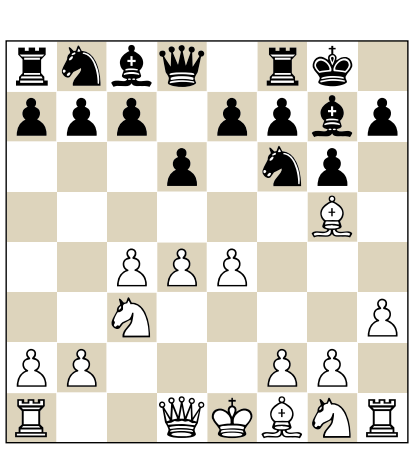
The good old King's Indian.

4.e4 d6 5.h3

Since people have discovered that the King's Indian is pretty much a weak spot in Levon's repertoire, Levon must have adopted a system or two.

5...0-0 6.♗g5

A relatively rare line, but certainly logical, as White prevents ...e5.



6...a6!?

The alternative, 6...c5, in Benoni-style, is the most natural, when play can continue in the following direction: 7.d5 e6 8.♗d3 exd5 9.cxd5 ♖e8 10.♘f3 c4 11.♗c2 b5 12.a3 ♘bd7, and Grischuk (Black) managed to beat Kramnik from this position in the 2011 Amber tournament (rapid).

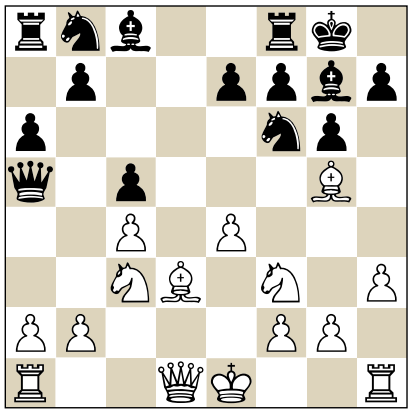
7.♘f3 c5 8.dxc5

8.d5 b5 is the idea, as ♗g5 and h3 would be a waste of time in a Benko-Volga type of position.

8...♕a5

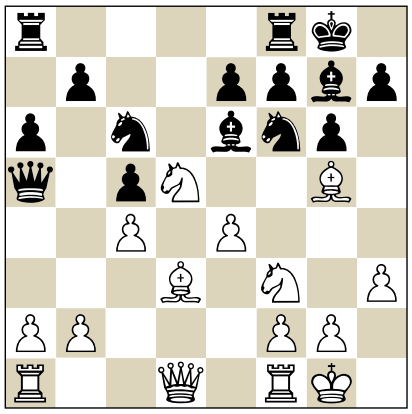
8...dxc5!? would allow White to exchange the queens, 9.♕xd8 ♖xd8, although I don't see what's the big deal after 10.e5 ♘fd7 11.e6!? ♘e5!?.

9.♗d3 dxc5



Structurally speaking, Black should be quite happy: White has a weak d4-square, while Black can cover his d5-square with ...e7-e6. Yet, White is too much ahead in development and it's he who seems to have a slight plus.

10.0-0 ♘c6 11.♘d5! ♗e6

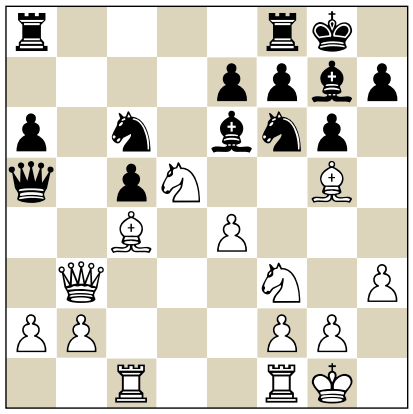


12.♕b3?! Somehow putting himself in the line of fire of Black's only active idea in this position, which is ...b7-b5. Aronian must have thought that the ensuing complications would favour him, but in fact it's far from clear.

More cautious was 12.a3!, preparing ♖c1, aimed against ...b5, or ♖b1, intending to play b4 himself.

12...b5! Now Black gets the desired counterplay.

13.♖ac1 bxc4 14.♗xc4



14...♘xe4!? The most principled reaction. Also possible was 14...♖ab8, but White may get a slight edge in the ensuing positions: 15.♕c2 ♗xd5 16.exd5 ♘d4 17.♕d3 ♖xb2 18.♘xd4

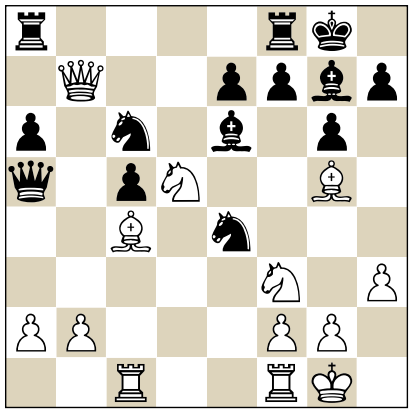
NEW IN CHESS

Levon Aronian finished shared third, half a point behind the top finishers. Nothing to write home about when there is 'one winner and seven losers'.

cxd4 19.♕xd4 ♖b7, and Black should be more or less fine.

15.♕b7 This shouldn't have yielded White much, but it turned out to be enough to confuse the by now exhausted and shaky Teimour.

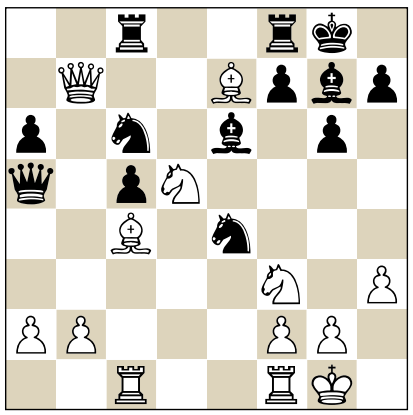
15.♘xe7+ is not much either: 15...♘xe7 16.♗xe7 ♖fe8 17.♗xe6 ♖xe7 18.♗d5 ♖ae8, when White keeps some optical edge, but it shouldn't be much with accurate defending.



15...♖ac8

15...♗xd5 would have worked, too: 16.♗xd5 ♘xg5 17.♘xg5 ♘e5!, and White has some options, but Black can keep the balance with some computer-like tightrope walking: 18.f4 ♖ab8 19.♕xe7 c4! 20.♖cd1 ♖b5! 21.♗e6 ♕b4!. OK, those weren't the only moves, but they were definitely the most spectacular ones. Now it will be a draw: 22.♕xb4 ♖xb4 23.fxe5 fxe6 24.♖xf8+ ♗xf8 25.♘xe6 ♗h6.

16.♗xe7



16...♗xd5??

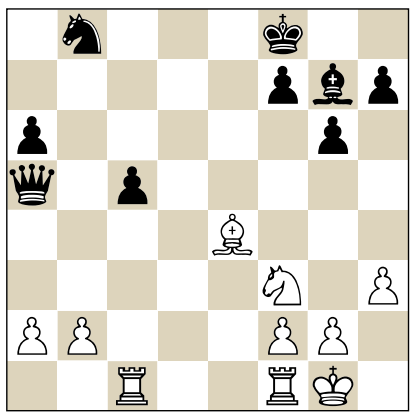
I don't know whether Radjabov missed the queen sacrifice or whether he didn't find an alternative. Either way, no one will deny that London just wasn't his event.

After the pretty straightforward 16...♖fe8!, Black is not worse at all: 17.♖fe1 (the only move) 17...♗xd5 18.♗xd5 ♘xe7, and White can take with either piece on e4, and Black is absolutely out

> 'I have noticed that every top player has at least one passion that is at the same time his weakness (Achilles' heel, if you wish).'

of danger: 19.♖xe4 (or 19.♗xe4 c4!) 19...♘xd5 20.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 21.♕xd5 ♗xb2 22.♖xc5 ♕d8, and it's a draw.

17.♗xf8 ♖b8 18.♕xb8 ♘xb8 19.♗xd5 ♔xf8 20.♗xe4

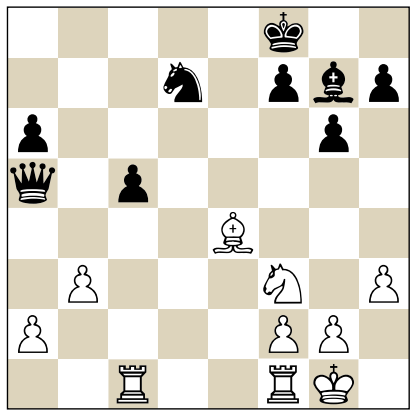


20...♘d7

20...♗xb2!? 21.♖b1 looks troublesome due to the pin on the b-file, but maybe it should have been tried: 21...♕b4!, and White has no way to win material: 22.♗d5 ♘d7 23.♖fd1 ♘b6 24.♗b3 c4 25.♖xb2 ♘a4!. Black is still fighting, but practically speaking he should be in trouble, either after a rook move to the side (♖c2, ♖e2), or 26.♖bb1 ♘c3 27.♗c2 ♘xb1 28.♗xb1. Still, the indefatigable engine claims that Black has excellent chances to hold after 28...a5! ☺

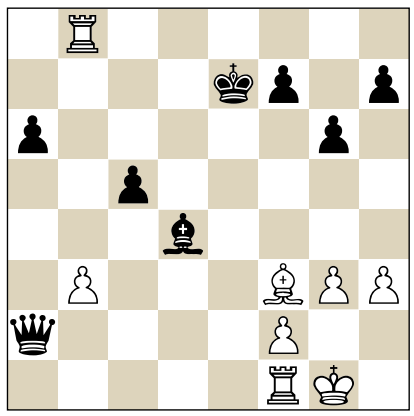
21.b3

I have noticed that every top player has at least one passion that is at the same time his weakness (Achilles' heel, if you wish). For Vishy it is his blind love for knights, for Magnus it is the semi-awkward move ♗g5 in the Spanish and for Levon it is his love for queen sacrifices (and also the move g3-g4, which he makes whenever he gets the chance). Here, though, Levon not only misses his queen (yahoo!), but he also has more than enough material for it. For me, the result wasn't really in doubt from here on in.



21...♕xa2 22.♖cd1 ♘e5 23.♖d8+ ♔e7 24.♖b8 Even though the computer still claims that the position is perfectly tenable, it is hard to imagine Black can do anything about his f7-weakness in the long run.

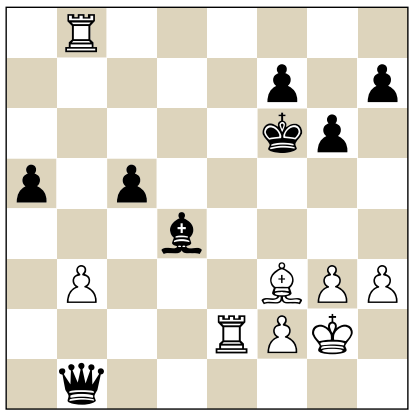
24...♘xf3+ Perhaps 24...♕e2!? was an idea. **25.♗xf3 ♗d4 26.g3**



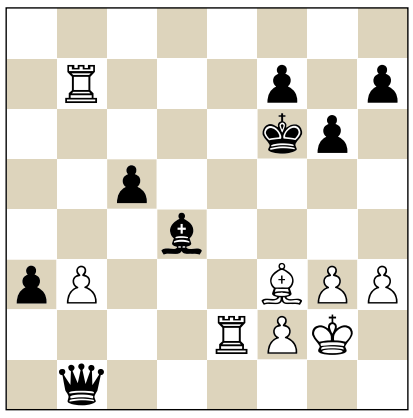
26...a5? Radjabov was in a desperate mood by now, but it seems that this was somewhat premature.

26...♕d2! would have kept White's rook on f1, and somehow I would have liked to see how Levon would have solved this issue.

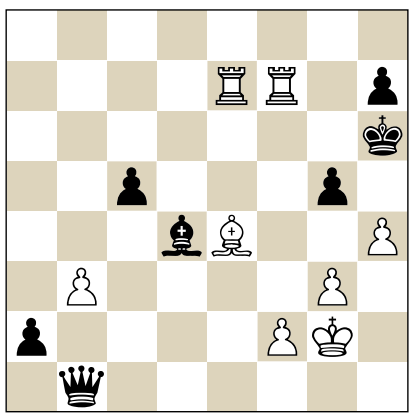
27.♖e1+ ♔f6 28.♖e2 ♕b1+ 29.♔g2



29...a4? Losing on the spot. I guess Teimour thought he was lost anyway, but in fact White still needs to demonstrate a plan.
After 29...♔g7! 30.♖b7 ♕d3 31.♖ee7 ♕f5 it is hard for White to get his bishop to the desirable c4-square.
30.♖b7! a3
This pawn arrives one tempo too late.



31.♗d5! a2 32.♖xf7+ ♔g5 33. h4+ ♔h6 34.♖ee7 g5 35.♗e4!

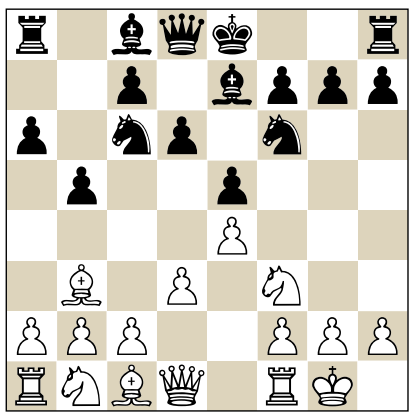


And Black resigned, as he will have to give two queens to save his king from mate.

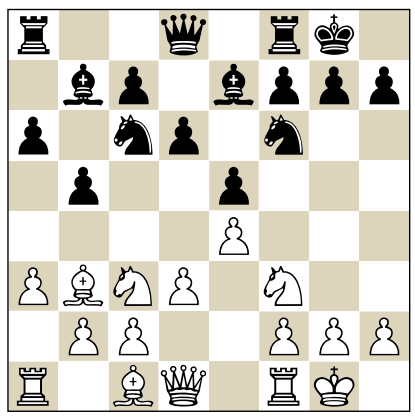
NOTES BY
Peter Svidler

RL 13.5 – C84
Magnus Carlsen
Peter Svidler
London 2013 (14)

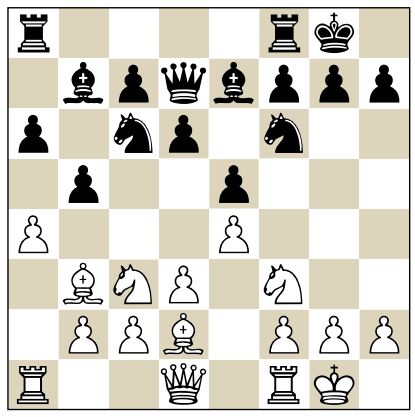
When the Candidates' was over, and I was approached with the request to annotate this game, I tried suggesting that the game I won the day before, against Vassily Ivanchuk, might be a better choice – and that was *before* I had a closer look at this one. Now that I have gone through it with as fine a comb as I could afford, considering the mad schedule I imposed on myself in April, I can definitely say that my suggestion was a very valid one. In fact, there are very few positive things I can say about our play – apart from the fact that it was, as games featuring Magnus tend to be, very hard-fought, and, of course, that it had definite (if I am allowed to borrow one of the more memorable London press-conference sound bites) 'historic importance'. One more aside before we begin – a win with black in a decisive round against the World Number 1 is a huge achievement, of course – but it has to be said that this game was immeasurably more of a decider for my opponent than it was for me, giving me something of a free roll.
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4. ♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.d3 b5 7. ♗b3 d6



8.a3
Deviating from 8.a4 b4, seen, among others, in Svidler-Carlsen, London Candidates 2013, Round 6 – won by Black, as you probably know.
8...0-0 9.♘c3 ♗b7

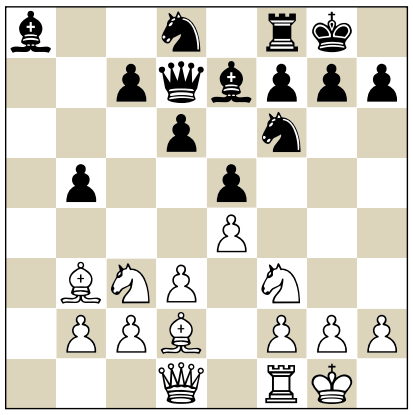


My very decent result in the Candidates' was due in no small part to my vastly improved opening preparation. There weren't that many games where everything went completely according to plan, but our team managed to get a number of educated guesses right, and this games is a case in point. We only settled on this rare move about 30 minutes before the game, but, much more importantly, we managed to reject most of the alternatives, which meant I could play this fast, and with conviction.
10.♗d2 Played almost instantly, but after **10...♕d7** Magnus began thinking, and I felt as if I had passed the first minor skirmish with flying colours.
11.a4
White had other options, of course – but this looks very natural.



11...♘d8
Keeping it simple, and not getting distracted from the original plan by 11... ♘d4 12.♘xd4 exd4 13.♘e2 c5 14. ♘g3, with very unclear play.
12.axb5 axb5 13.♖xa8 ♗xa8

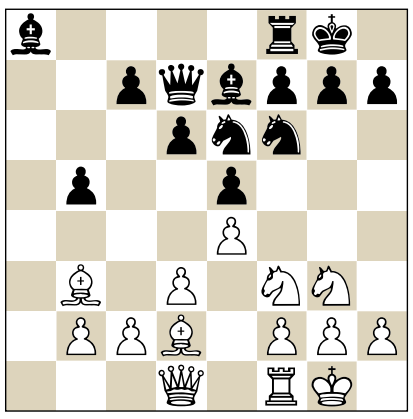
Magnus Carlsen and Peter Svidler have arrived for the last round. A thrilling finale was guaranteed, but who could have predicted the drama that was to unfold?



14.♘e2

14.♕a1 does not lead to much: 14...♘e6 15.♕a5 c6 (15...♗c6 16.♗d5! allows the bishop trade, which should be in White's favour) 16.♖a1 ♗b7, and Black is ready to start repelling the invasion.

14...♘e6 15.♘g3

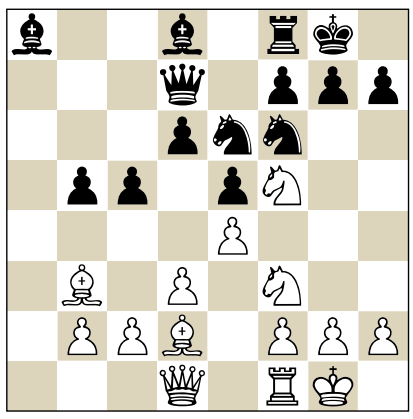


15...c5 Played after the first serious think of the game, and, as usual, I suspect the initial idea of playing 15...♖e8 16.♘f5 ♗f8 17.♖e1 c5 was at least not worse. The game is still very balanced after 18.c4 ♗c6 19.cxb5 ♗xb5 20.♕c2, but there was many a moment later in the game when I pined for the safety the bishop on f8 affords.

16.♘f5 ♗d8

Continuing in the same 'let's keep the tension' vein.

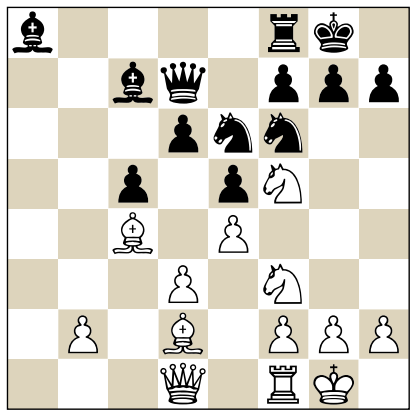
Black is doing quite well after 16...c4!? 17.dxc4 bxc4 18.♗xc4 ♗xe4 19.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 20.♘g5 (20.♗b4 ♕b7!, and White has to be careful – but he will hold after 21.♗xd6 ♖d8 22.♗xe6 fxe6 23.c4!) 20...♘xg5 21.♗xg5 ♖c8 22.♗d3, and the position is equal.



17.c4 Stopping any ...c5-c4 ideas once and for all. Bad is 17.♘g5 d5, and Black assumes the initiative.

17...bxc4 There was nothing wrong with 17...b4 18.♗a4 ♗c6 19.♗xc6 ♕xc6, but I was worried I might drift into a passive, somewhat worse position there, something I did not really want against this particular opponent.

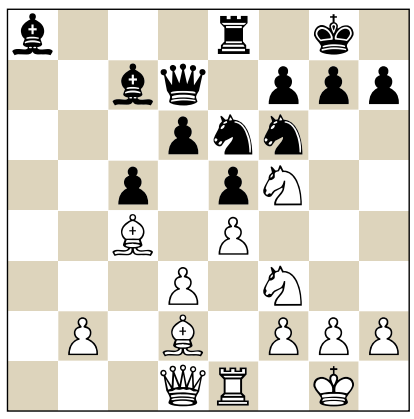
18.♗xc4 ♗c7



19.♖e1 For some reason, I had expected 19.♕b3 here, which gives Black a very decent game after both 19...♖b8 20.♕a2 ♘d4!? 21.♘3xd4 cxd4 (21...exd4 22.♗g5 is less precise) 22.♗g5 ♗xe4!, with very sharp play which looks to be good for Black, and 19...d5 20.exd5 ♘d4! 21.♘5xd4 exd4 22.♕a3 ♗xd5 23.♕xc5 ♗d6! 24.♕b5 ♕xb5 25.♗xb5 ♗xf3 26.gxf3 ♖b8, something I had actually seen during the game.

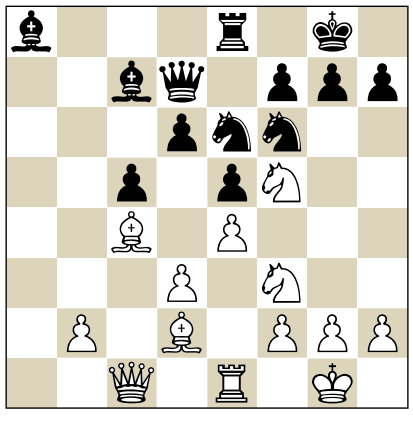
The text-move is much more logical – now it's much harder for Black to manage the d5 break.

19...♖e8 A very natural move, but if Black wants to drive White's pieces back, he should consider 19...♘f4!? 20.♗c3 (20.♗xf4?! exf4 21.♕d2 d5 is very good for Black) 20...g6 21.♘e3, and the position is quite balanced.



20.♕c1!

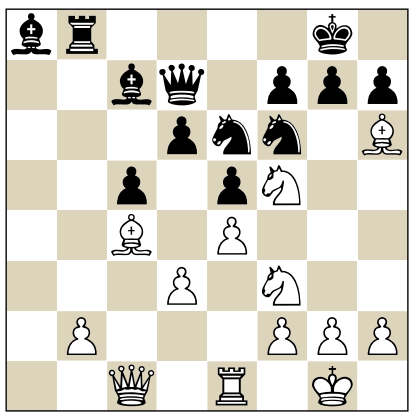
This move changes nothing objectively – but it succeeded in freaking me out completely. More than one person asked me why I did not play 20...♖b8 here, which to me is a clear sign that people are watching the first line too much – but the fact that the machine completely ignores the 'attack' on the kingside is a very good indication that there was no reason to panic.



20...♘h5

20...d5?! does not work here: 21.exd5 ♘d4 22.♘3xd4! (22.♘5xd4 cxd4 23.♗b5 ♕xb5 24.♕xc7 ♕xd3 25.♖xe5 ♖f8 is equal) 22...exd4 (not 22...cxd4 23.♘xg7!) 23.♖xe8+ ♘xe8 24.♕e1! ♘f6 25.♕e7 ♕xe7 26.♘xe7+ ♔f8 27.♘c6, with a white advantage.

However, after 20...♖b8, which will serve as an useful 'pass' move for our purposes, White can't get anywhere on the kingside: 21.♗h6 (21.♗g5 ♘h5 – 21...♗d8 is also OK – 22.g3 g6 23.♘e3 ♔g7 24.♗h6+ ♔g8, and apparently there is nothing better here than 25.♗g5 ♔g7, with a draw)



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

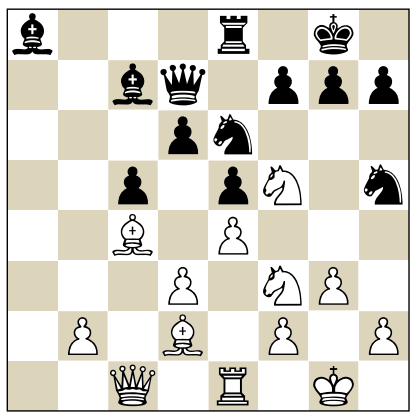
21...♘h5! (now is the time for this). Sadly, White has to retreat: 22.♗g5 (22.♗xg7 ♘hxg7 23.♕h6 ♗d8 loses) 22...♘hf4, and Black is fine.

White is clearly better after 21...♘g4? 22.♗xg7 d5 23.exd5 ♘xg7 24.♘xg7 ♔xg7 25.h3.

And 21...g6 22.♗g5 ♘h5 23.♘h6+ ♔g7 24.♘g4 ♘hf4 25.♗f6+ ♔f8 26.h3!, planning 27.g3, also favours White.

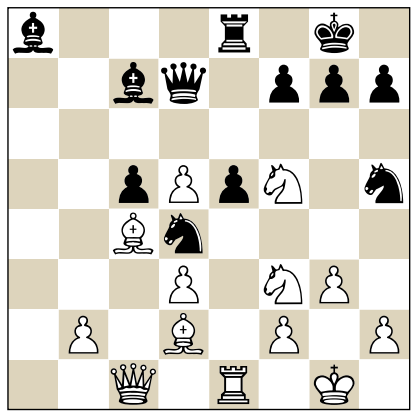
21.g3

21.b4 cxb4 22.♗xb4 ♘hf4 is just equal.



21...g6?

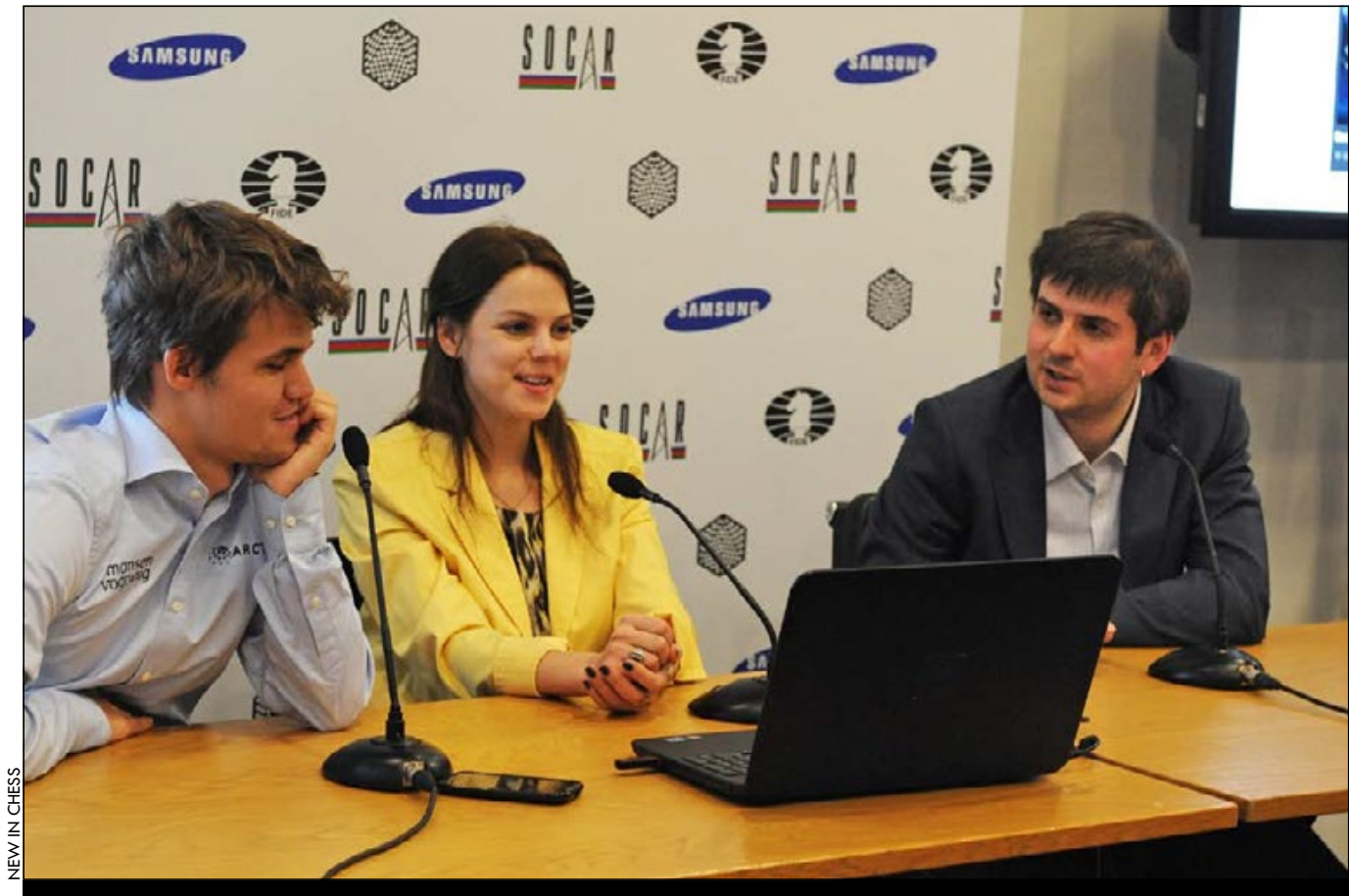
Starting from this point, the quality of play deteriorates sharply, as time-trouble starts looming large over both of us. Once again, bad was 21...d5? 22.exd5 ♘d4



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

23.♘5xd4! (White won't get anywhere after 23.♘3xd4 cxd4 24.g4 ♘f6 25.♗h6 – 25.♗a5 ♘xd5! 26.♕g5 f6 – 25...g6!) 23...cxd4 24.♘g5 ♗d8 25.♕d1 ♘f6 26.d6 ♘d5 27.♕b3, and Black is not coordinated well enough to equalize.

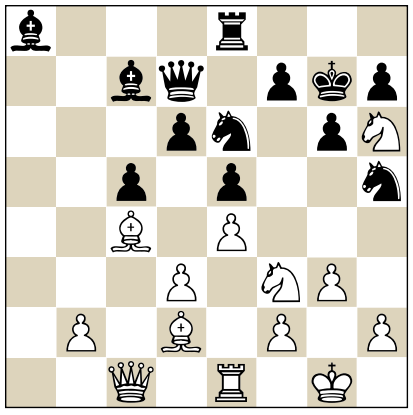
However, after the ubiquitous 21...♖b8 White has no threats, and the game is still balanced.



NEW IN CHESS

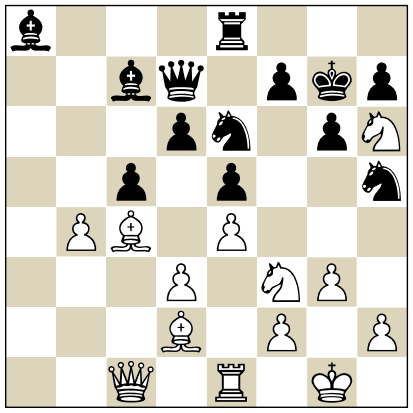
At the press conference with Nastasia Karlovich, both Peter Svidler and Magnus Carlsen were soon smiling. The Russian had won, the Norwegian knew by now that, to his immense relief, Vladimir Kramnik was losing as well.

22.♘h6+ ♔g7



23.♘g5?!

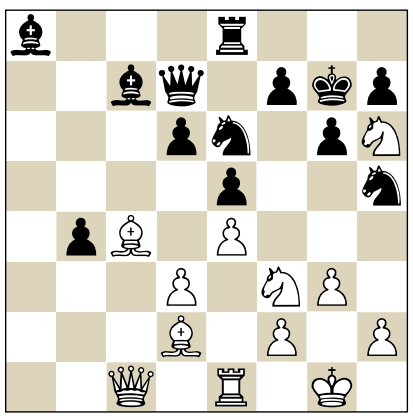
It is only immediately obvious to the machine – I am fairly sure this move did not occur to either of us – but after 23.b4! I would have been in a world of trouble.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

In fact, it would seem that the best way for Black to proceed here is 23...f6 24.♗xe6 ♕xe6 25.bxc5 d5, hoping for some compensation due to the currently misplaced white pieces – but the unsafe king makes this a very unhappy proposition for Black.

Instead, 23...cxb4 runs into

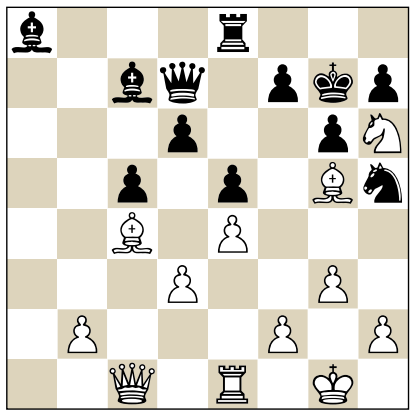


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

24.♘xf7! – with devastating effect now that the bishop on c7 is exposed after all the captures, if Black takes on f7 – 24...♗b6 25.♘7g5 ♘d8 26.♔g2! is horrible for Black – the knight will escape via h3, while Black is ruined on both flanks.

Finally, there is 23...♗b6 24.♘xf7! ♔xf7 25.♘g5+ ♔g7 26.♘xe6+ ♖xe6 27.♗h6+ ♔g8 28.♗xe6+ ♕xe6 29.♗e3, and once again Black is suffering.

23...♘xg5 24.♗xg5

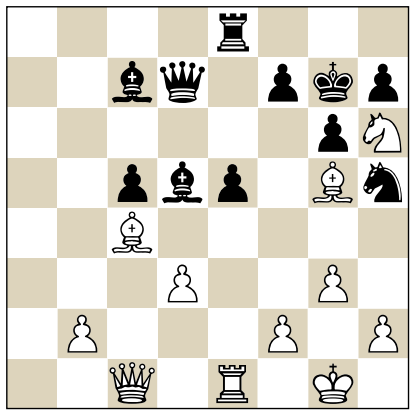


24...d5

Not the best. Stronger was 24...f6 25.♗e3 d5 (bad is 25...f5? 26.♘xf5+ gxf5 27.♗h6+ ♔h8 28.♕g5) 26.♗xd5 ♗xd5 27.exd5 ♗d6!, keeping the knight penned in on h6 for now, and Black should be fine.

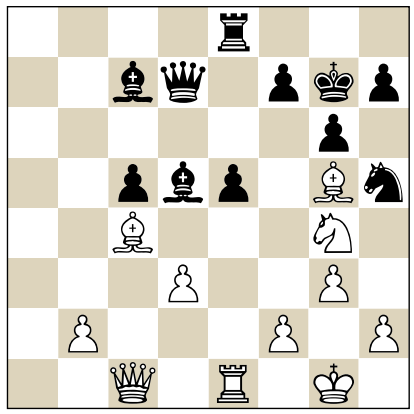
25.exd5 ♗xd5

And neither is this: it was important, apparently, to begin with 25...♗a5!, driving the rook to a bad square before taking on d5: 26.♖e2 ♗xd5 27.♗xd5 ♕xd5 28.♘g4 f6 29.♗h6+ ♔f7, and the fact that d3 is hanging with tempo now means that Black is out of the woods. After the text-move Black is clearly worse.



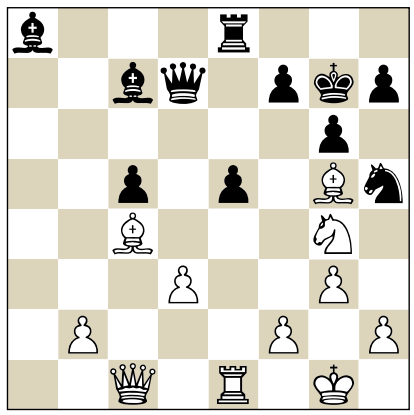
26.♘g4!?

26.♗xd5 ♕xd5 27.♘g4 is much less ambitious – but with a completely safe (and not inconsiderable) pull for White. However, Magnus saw a much more attractive move, and couldn't resist.



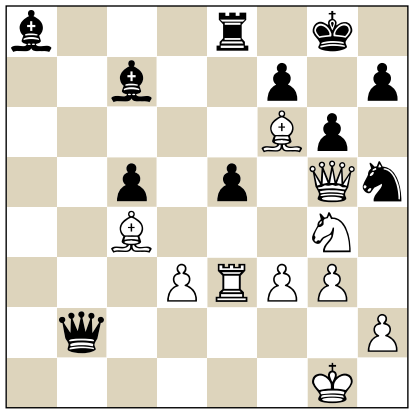
26...♗f3!?

It took me a while to realize that 27.♗f6 is just a check, not mate in 4 as I thought initially – but once I figured that out, I got very excited. Suddenly the game looked like it might become double-edged. Objectively, the best move in this position, as far as I was able to ascertain, is 26...♗a8 – but even figuring out why it is stronger than 26...♗b7 would have been no mean feat:



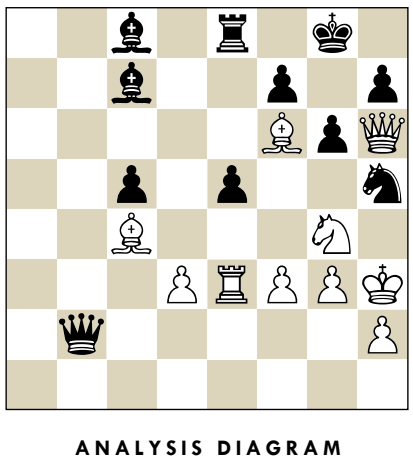
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

26...♗a8! 27.♗f6+ ♔g8 28.♕g5! ♕c6 29.♖e4. This is where I stopped during the game – it looked mad to me to allow this, but the machine continues calmly: 29...♕b6 30.♖e3! (30.♗e7 wins against 26...♗b7, but here Black has the magical 30...♕xb2 31.♖e1 ♕b7!!) 30...♕xb2 31.f3, and now the absolutely inhuman



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

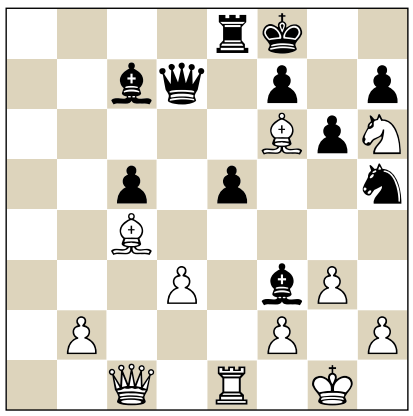
31...♗b7!!, creating the threat of ...♖a8-a1, and, also... 32.♕h6 ♕c1+ 33.♔g2 ♕b2+ 34.♔h3... 34...♗c8!!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

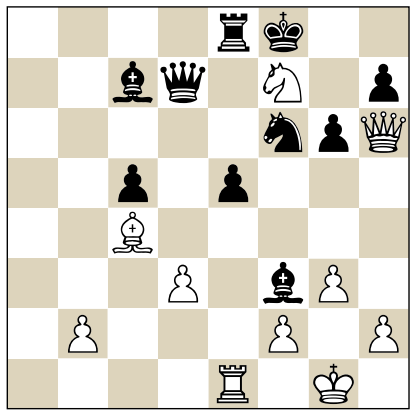
35.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 36.♕xh7+ ♔f8 37.♕xc7 ♗xg4+ 38.fxg4 ♘xf6 39.♖f3 e4 40.dxe4 g5! 41.e5 ♕xe5 42.♕xe5 ♖xe5 43.♖xf6+ ♔e7, and as usual it all ends in a draw.

27.♗f6+ A safe alternative was 27.h3!? ♗xg4 28.hxg4 ♘f4!, with an immediate draw, since it is unwise to take the pawn (28...♕xg4 29.♕e3! ♗d6 30.♖a1), but, already in time-trouble, Magnus continues to play for the maximum. **27...♔g8** 27...♔f8? loses: 28.♘xe5! ♗xe5 29.♕h6+ ♔g8 30.♗xe5 ♕h3? 31.♗xf7+ . **28.♘h6+ ♔f8**



29.♕e3

29.♘xf7 is a draw – which we both missed! After 29...♘xf6 30.♕h6+



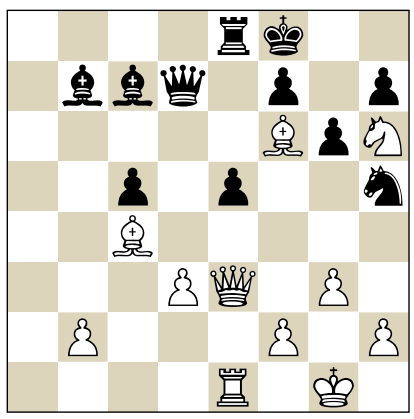
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Black has to play 30...♔g8! 31.♘d6+ (31.♘xe5+? ♗d5) 31...♔h8 (Black is not better after 31...♗d5 32.♗xd5+ ♘xd5 33.♘xe8 ♕xe8 34.♖a1).

We both assumed that Black would be better after 30...♔e7 (instead of 30...♔g8), which loses to (completely unseen by us) 31.♘g5! (not 31.♘xe5? ♗xe5 32.♖xe5+ ♔d8 33.♕f4 ♕f5! – or 33...♕c6 34.♗b5 ♖xe5! 35.♕xe5 ♕b6) 31...♕f5 32.♗e6.

29...♗b7

29...♕c6 30.♗h4 f5 (30...♗h1 31.f3, winning) 31.♗b5 ♕xb5 32.♕xf3 ♕d7 33.♗g5 is slightly better for White.

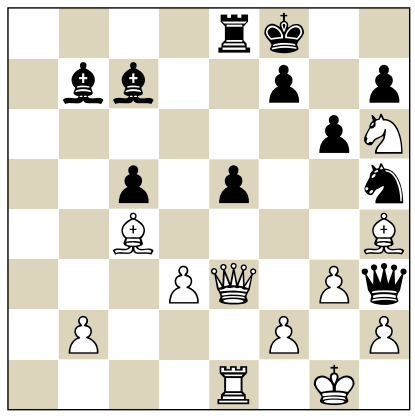


30.♗h4?!

Only from this point on, with a couple of minutes left for the remaining moves and the pressure mounting, does Magnus begin to make significant mistakes. Much has been made of the fact that he did not play 30.♗h8! here, not least by his former mentor, which I personally find rather harsh, considering the situation. It would have been a spectacular move, though – after 30...♕c6 31.f3 ♖e7 32.♖f1 ♕d6 33.♔g2 White is better: Black can do absolutely nothing with the cluster of white pieces in the corner, and White will continue to slowly improve.

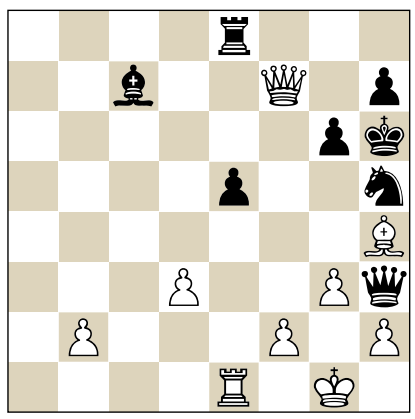
30...♕h3

Based on a miscalculation. Instead, 30...f6 31.♘g8! ♗d8 32.♕h6+ ♕g7 33.♕e3! ♕d7! 34.♕h6+ would have led to one of the more peculiar 'threefolds' you're likely to see this year.



31.f3?

This one is fatal. Also bad was 31.♕xc5+? ♔g7 32.♗d5 ♗b6! 33.♕b5 ♗xd5 34.♕xd5 ♔xh6. But after 31.♗d5! ♗xd5 32.♕xc5+ ♔g7 33.♕xd5 ♔xh6 34.♕xf7 Black has to bail out:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

34...♗a5! 35.♕xe8 ♗xe1 36.♕xe5 ♗xf2+ 37.♔xf2 ♕xh2+ 38.♔e3 ♕g1+ 39.♔d2 ♕g2+, and since the exchange of queens will allow g5 and the capture of the bishop, the game will end in a draw: 40.♔c3 ♕c6+ 41.♔d2 ♕g2+ 42.♔c1 ♕f1+ 43.♔c2 ♕g2+ 44.♔b1 ♕g1+.

During the game I assumed I could

RAY MORRIS-HILL

The 2013 Candidates: (front row) Svidler, Kramnik, Gelfand, (back row) Radjabov, Carlsen, Grischuk, Aronian and Ivanchuk.

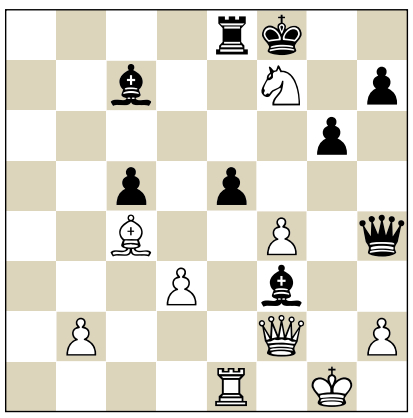
just play 34...♖c8 (instead of 34... ♗a5), which is bad for more than one reason: 35.♗e7!? – 35.♕e7 ♕f5 36.♖c1 ♖g8! 37.♕xc7 g5 allows Black to hope for survival – 35...♕f5 36.♕xf5 gxf5 37.♖c1!, and Black is doomed: 37...♘g7 38.♖c6+ ♔h5 39.h3!, planning to give mate by f3 and g4.

31...♘f4 Now Black is winning.

32.gxf4

There is nothing better: 32.♕d2? loses to 32...♗a5. 32.♕f2 ♕xh4! 33.♕xc5+ ♕e7 34.♕xe7+ ♖xe7 35.gxf4 ♗xf3, and Black should win this endgame.

32...♕xh4 33.♘xf7 ♗xf3 34.♕f2



34...♕g4+?

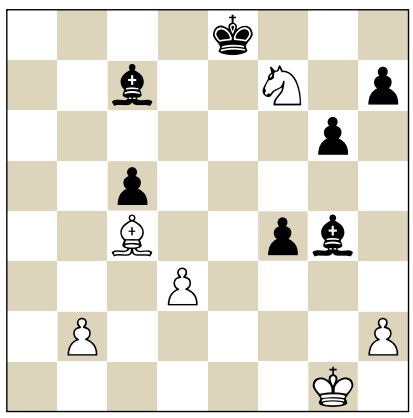
It was better to play 34...♕xf4 35.♖e3 ♗g4 36.♘g5 ♕xf2+ 37.♔xf2 ♗d8, and Black should, slowly but surely, convert his extra pawn into a full point. The text gives White a chance...

35.♕g3?

... which goes a-begging.

35.♔f1! ♕h3+ 36.♔g1 would give White excellent hopes for a draw: 36...exf4 37.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 38.♘g5 ♕g4+ 39.♔f1, and there is no mate after 39...♗c6 40.♕xc5 ♕d1+ 41.♔f2 ♕d2+ 42.♔f1 ♕c1+ 43.♔e2 ♕xb2+ 44.♔e1.

35...exf4 36.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 37.♕xg4 ♗xg4



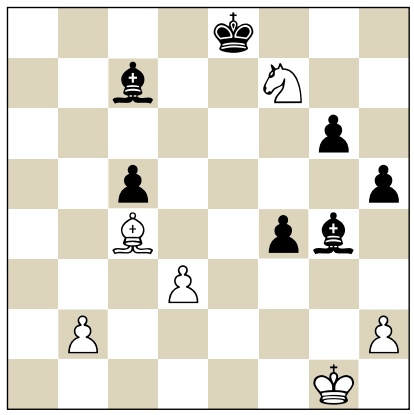
Now it's all but over.

38.♘g5 h6 I did not want to break the chain, since after 38...♗e5 39.♘xh7! ♗d4+ 40.♔f1 f3 41.♘g5 the knight is just in time to stop the f-pawn from queening.

39.♘f7

39.♘e6 ♗d6 would just trap the knight.

39...h5



40.♘h6

Once again, there was an opportunity to put something on h8 – but here it wouldn't change much: 40.♘h8 ♔e7! (also winning should be 40...♗f5 41.♗f7+ ♔e7 42.♗xg6 ♔f6! 43.♗xh5 ♗xd3) 41.♘xg6+ ♔f6 42.♘h4 ♔g5 43.♘g2 ♗e5, and the knight is so cut off it will get lost soon.

40.h4 would prolong the suffering – but not change the outcome.

40...♗d1

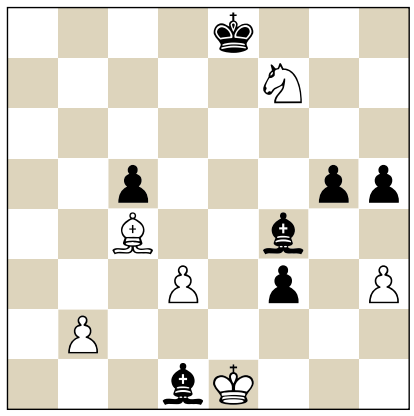
The time-control has been passed, and the rest is easy.

41.♔f2 f3 42.h3

42.h4 ♗d8 is also curtains.

42...♗f4 43.♘f7 g5 44.♔e1

Allowing a little flourish.



44...g4 45.hxg4 hxg4 46.♔xd1 g3 47.♔e1 g2 48.♔f2 ♗h2

And White resigned. ■

The beautiful game

Tournament organisers frequently offer brilliancy prizes. However, the Chess Festival in Monte Carlo 1967 had a bonus feature. Its prize for 'The Most Beautiful Game', was part sponsored and part judged by François Le Lionnais, author of *Les Prix de Beauté aux Echecs*. **Jimmy Adams** tells the story of his own attempts to play spectacular chess and also the controversial decision not to award Le Prix de Beauté to tournament winner Predrag Ostojic. He also remembers players he met, including Bobby Fischer, with whose help he achieved his first ever victory against a greatmaster…

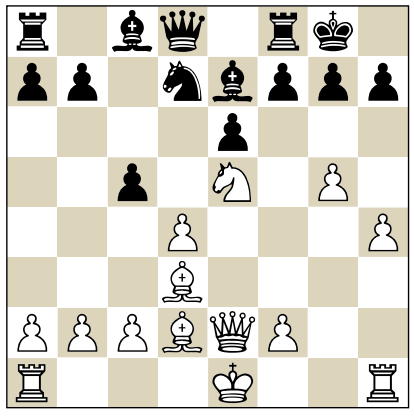
Dear Jimmy
a souvenir of my victory
in Monte Carlo in 1967 and
my meeting with the wonder-
ful Princess Grace, allias
Grace Kelly, and Prince Ranier !
IGM Predrag Ostojic

Just like Fischer in his world title match against Spassky, I began the 1967 Monte Carlo Open with two zeros – a self-inflicted defeat and an irresponsible forfeit. True, my circumstances were slightly different from Bobby's, although in one game, after forty moves of manoeuvring, I too had reached a position where I could snatch a hot pawn. But what I did not notice was that my opponent, who had no pieces stationed beyond his third row, could then unleash a startling checkmate with his queen and bishop against my lonely king on the back rank.

In the other game, I had failed to arrive for the resumption of an unfinished game at the scheduled hour of 9 a.m. Late nights and early mornings do not go well together and I overslept – rather than overstepped – the time limit.

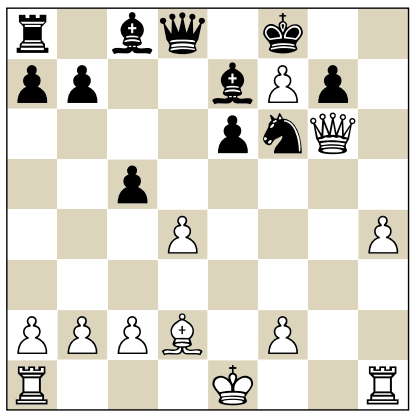
So, after this catastrophic start, I vowed henceforth to play all-out attacking chess – with no more adjournments. Perhaps then I would instead have a chance of winning *Le Prix de Beauté*.

Indeed, as it turned out, I surprised even myself with the effectiveness of my so-called 'Bobby Tal' style, with which I scored one win after another. However, my friend and future Swiss champion, Heinz Schaufelberger, remained unimpressed. 'Your play is unsafe!' he told me, in his fluent but at times quaint English. Actually, in England we say 'unsound', which is bad enough, but 'unsafe' somehow seemed even more unethical. Nevertheless I have to admit there was some justification for his criticism, as you might detect from the following brutal game.



Adams-Levaux
Monte Carlo Open 1967 (8)

15.♗xh7+ Greco's famous sacrifice, but here it has an original twist. **15...♔xh7 16.♘xf7** This was a straightforward demolition job, I thought. **16...♖xf7 17.♕h5+ ♔g8 18.g6 ♘f6 19.gxf7+ ♔f8 20.♕g6** I assumed this was winning, due to the threats of ♖g1 or h5-h6.



20...♕xd4 Now the attack rolls on. **21.0-0-0 ♕g4 22.h5 ♗d6 23.♖dg1 ♕xg6 24.hxg6 ♔e7 25.♖h8** Black resigned. If 25...♔d7 then 26.♗g5 ♘d5 27.♖d8+ ♔c7 28.♖xd6 ♗d7 29.♖xd5 exd5 30.♗f6 gxf6 31.g7 – what fabulous passed pawns!

Of course, I felt very satisfied with myself. A short game – and I could spend the next morning on the beach in the beautiful French resort of Cap d'Ail, where I had set up camp for the duration of the tournament.

But there was to be a sting in the tail ...

By this time, Brian Reilly, former Irish champion and editor of the *British Chess Magazine*, had arrived in Monte Carlo to watch the tournament. He kindly introduced me to a number of French chess celebrities, including Victor Kahn, with whom he had been good friends in the 1920s and 30s. At that time, Brian lived in the south of France, where his father ran a pharmaceutical business in Menton, and he became a member of the prestigious Nice Chess Club, in a period when it was frequented by the World Champion, Alexander Alekhine.

I was delighted to talk to Mr Kahn, a Russian emigrant to France and a prolific chess writer. I wanted to tell him how much I had learned from his book *The Art of Checkmate*, first published – in Monaco! – in 1947 and still in print today.

Because Mr Kahn had taught me all I knew about checkmating unwary opponents, it was with great pride that I demonstrated to him my game against Levaux. After all he had devoted a whole chapter in his book to 'Greco's sacrifice'. However, unfortunately for me, he immediately found a flaw in what I mistakenly thought was my truly brilliant play.

'A nice finish, but what did you miss?' he asked me, with just the hint of a smile. I thought for a while but nothing sprung to mind, so he challenged me again: 'You have read my book, what advice did I give at the end?'

I began to think again...Yes, there was a chapter entitled 'Pay attention to the ranks!' So I replayed the moves of the game on the board and then suddenly realised what both I, and indeed my opponent, had failed to notice. Black should have played 20...♕d5!,

not 20...♕xd4, then, after 21.0-0-0, he can follow with 21...♕h5!, still threatening an exchange of queens but without allowing the decisive pawn advance to h5.

Further harsh words from *The Art of Checkmate,* 'A woodpusher overlooks the ranks!', resonated in my head.

But the story did not end there. Far from having a joke at my expense, Mr Kahn instead left me in a state of suspense, with the parting words, 'Don't worry, you are in good company!' and he would speak further with me the following day.

And sure enough, after I had finished my game in the next round, I met up again with Mr Kahn, who had been watching the games of the masters and grandmasters, and we went along together to the analysis room. He was carrying some magazines under his arm and, patting them appreciatively, he continued to keep me hanging on: 'I have something here that will interest you ...'

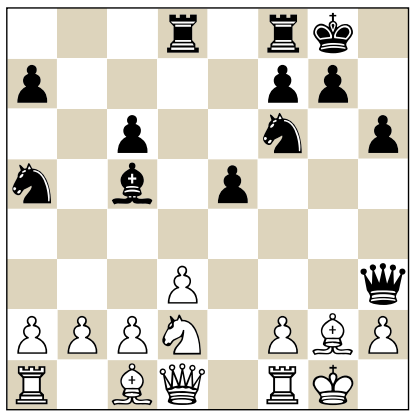
He then went on to tell me that forty years previously he had given a simultaneous display in Rouen and suffered only one defeat – to the great artist Marcel Duchamp! Later they both moved to the French Riviera, where the weather was kinder, and also became members of the Nice Chess Club. Duchamp subsequently emigrated to New York and it was only now, in Monte Carlo, after so many years, that the two of them had the opportunity to meet again and share reminiscences. Moreover, as a souvenir, Duchamp had given him some specially autographed copies of the glossy American magazine *Chess Life* and it was from these that he proceeded to read out loud to me.

He quoted from a column *Fischer Talks Chess*: 'Any player, no matter how strong he is, can overlook quite simple moves in the course of the game. The point is, published analysis should be free from such errors. I pride myself on the fact that I have never made a mistake in analysis.'

COLLECTION DAVID DELUCIA

'Think horizontally, as well as vertically' – even you, Bobby Fischer!

However, Mr Kahn, referring to a second, slightly later issue of *Chess Life*, then set up the following position from a game **Fischer–Bisguier**, New York State Championship 1963, where Bobby had commented on his last move 15.♗g2:



'Forcing Black's queen off the file since 15...♕h4 would simply lose a pawn to 16.♘f3 ♕h5 17.♕e1.'

Mr Kahn quizzed me, 'Do you agree with this?', adding, 'Just like your game, having the black queen on h5 is important!'

At first I couldn't see what he was getting at. Then he gave me a clue: 'Remember, think horizontally, instead of vertically!' Finally I saw what Fischer had missed. Black can reply 17...♖fe8, and if 18.♕xa5 then 18...e4! and whether White plays 19.dxe4 allowing 19...♗xf2+ winning the queen, or 19.♕d2 allowing 19...exf3, he is lost.

I was very impressed that my former teacher, now in his late sixties, had spotted this mistake and suggested that he tell Fischer of his findings. However, it seems this never happened as the error remained uncorrected when the same annotations appeared in Bobby's *My 60 Memorable Games* a couple of years later.

■ ■ ■

It was at this time that I also got the chance to watch Bobby Fischer at very close quarters. He had been playing a postponed game with former world champion Vassily Smyslov in the small analysis room, to which players and spectators had been temporarily denied access. But when the arbiter came out to announce that the game had been agreed drawn, a group of us gate-crashed our way into the room to watch the post mortem analysis.

American grandmaster William Lombardy was already there, looking on as Fischer swung his rook along the third rank from one side of the board to the other, trying to convince Smyslov that he had the advantage. But in response to Bobby's 'I have a

beautiful endgame here,' his unruffled opponent remained absolutely unconcerned – and didn't say a word. He just let his good moves do the talking as Fischer tried in vain to make progress.

I was by now standing in the front line, right behind Fischer's back, and the ever-increasing crowd, packing into the room, was pushing me further and further forward until I was starting to cramp Bobby's style! It was at this moment, with the room filled to over-capacity, that he half-turned towards me with an outstretched hand and said firmly, but not angrily: 'Can we have a little more room around here?' After which I somehow managed to back off sufficiently so as not to continue to invade his space.

These were the only words Fischer ever spoke to me but they subsequently became the source of recurring jokes between Heinz and myself. For example, that evening, in our favourite café, after he had enjoyed a huge plate of spaghetti, bread rolls and glasses of wine, he found it necessary to loosen his belt (!) and remarked: 'I must make more room!' Then again, when he was analysing one of his games and found it necessary for his castled king to have a flight square, he advanced his h-pawn with the explanation: 'My king needs more room!'

■ ■ ■

Anyway, back to the tournament. Thanks to my lucky winning streak, I had worked my way up the standings and now faced my strongest opponent yet – thirteen(!) times Portuguese champion, Joaquim Durao.

FR 11.8 – C19
Jimmy Adams
Joaquim Durao
Monte Carlo Open 1967 (10)

1.e4 e6 As he played against Fischer the previous year at the Havana Olympiad – an encounter which, incidentally, makes an appearance in *My 60 Memorable Games.*

2.d4 Unlike Bobby, I did not play 2. d3. In that game, Durao, like so many others in the 1960s, was the victim of a King's Indian Attack.

2...d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♕c7 7.♕g4 ♘e7 8.♕xg7 ♖g8 9.♕xh7 cxd4 10. ♘e2 ♘bc6 11.f4 ♗d7 12.♕d3 dxc3 My theoretical knowledge of this variation ended here.

13.♗e3 a6 14.♖b1 b5

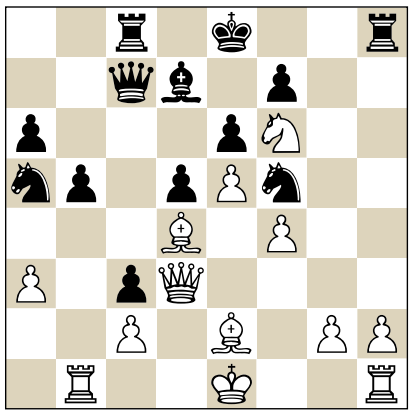
As queenside castling seemed unlikely now, I decided I'd better attack the proverbial 'king in the centre'.

15.♘g3 ♖h8 16.♗e2 ♘a5 17.♗d4 ♖c8 18.♘h5!

Now Black makes a losing move, but his position is pretty bad anyway.

18...♘f5 The tortuous defence 18... ♘g8 19.♕g3 ♘c6 20.♗c5 ♘ce7 loses to 21.♗xe7 ♘xe7 22.♕g7 ♘g6 23. ♗d3 ♖xh5 24.♗xg6.

19.♘f6+



19...♔e7 Not 19...♔f8 20.♗b6! ♕xb6 21.♘xd7+ forking king and queen, but 19...♔d8 is best. However White would still win after 20.♘xd5! exd5 21.e6! ♖h6 22.♗e5 ♕a7 23.exd7 ♕xd7 24.♗g4.

20.♕xf5! Only by the theory of 'invisible moves' can we explain why a national champion like Durao missed this queen sacrifice.

20...exf5

This pawn was technically 'pinned'.

21.♘xd5+

A 'backward' knight move!

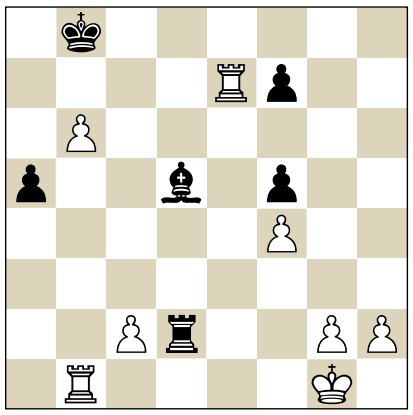
21...♔d8 22.♘xc7 ♔xc7 23.e6!

One blow after another.

23...♗xe6 24.♗xc3

Cheekily picking up another pawn before capturing the rook.

24...♔b6 25.♗d4+ ♔b7 26.♗xh8 ♖xh8 27.a4 ♖e8 28.♔f2 ♘c4 29.axb5 a5 30.♗xc4 ♗xc4 31.♖he1 ♖d8 32.b6 ♖d2+ 33.♔g1 ♗d5 34.♖e7+ ♔b8



35.b7! Threatening 36.♖e8+.

35...♖xg2+ 36.♔f1 ♖g8 37.♖a1! ♖g4 38.♖xa5 ♖xf4+ 39.♔e1

The game is not over yet. My opponent had hoped I would try to escape the checks by 39.♔g2 ♖g4+ 40.♔h3, when he would deliver the telling blow 40...♗g2 mate!

39...♗xb7 40.♖b5 ♖e4+ Forced.

41.♖xe4 fxe4 42.h4

The unstoppable 'outside passed pawn' adds a nice finishing touch.

Black resigned.

> 'Fischer half-turned towards me and said firmly, but not angrily: "Can we have a little more room around here?"'

I think my queen sacrifice compared well with the one that eventually won the Beauty Prize. However, the game as a whole was not as pretty as the cut-and-thrust miniature that *could* have won the competition, and was nowhere near as imaginative as the brilliant effort that *should* have won it! But all this will become clearer shortly...

■ ■ ■

Throughout the tournament I had quite a few pleasant and amusing exchanges with the veteran Belgian master, Victor Soultanbeieff. We would constantly bump into each other whilst walking around the playing hall between moves and in post-mortem analyses. He was very smart in his appearance and also very smart in tactics! And I called him 'Sultan' because he looked such a distinguished gentleman. He was also a great story-teller, as anyone who has a copy of his delightful autobiographical games collection *Le Maître de L'Attaque* will already be well aware.

Sultan had known tough times. He had got fascinated with chess whilst studying to be a Russian Orthodox priest, in accordance with family tradition. But then, when war broke out, he became a professional soldier and later an officer of the Tsar. Following the Russian Revolution, he migrated first to Bulgaria, then, in 1921, to the West, overcoming abject poverty and making a decent livelihood for himself and his family in Belgium, where he worked his way up in the chemical industry.

I think Sultan should be included in any list of 'strongest ever amateur chess players', even though he only took part in a dozen or so international tournaments. A dramatic example of the difficulties he had in combining gainful employment with competitive chess came at Liège 1930. Here he had to work in the chemical factory from 6 a.m. until 1 p.m., then get cleaned up and changed before travelling for an hour and a half to the playing hall. On arrival he would regularly find his clock had already been started with a loss of 20 minutes thinking time. Nimzowitsch said he had never seen a chess master play under such terrible conditions – and yet Sultan still managed wins against the great Frank Marshall and Nimzo himself!

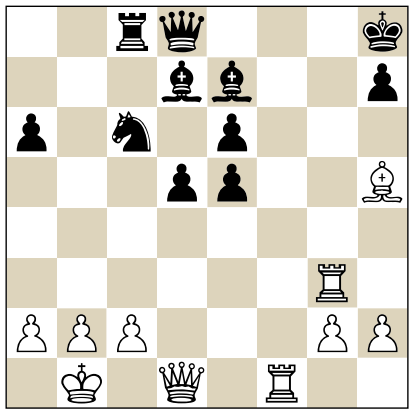
At the time of the Monte Carlo Open, he was over seventy years of age and yet remained a contender for a top three placing until the very end of the tournament. He made a big impression on me both as a fine human being and as an extraordinarily gifted chess tactician.

■ ■ ■

After my win against Durao, I had finally made it to Board 1, where I was facing the leader of the tournament, future Yugoslav champion, Predrag Ostojic, fresh from successes at Hastings and Beverwijk and way out in front on 9½/10. In this last round Sultan was sitting only a couple of tables away from me, and we were following each other's games.

Prior to the start of play, Heinz had told me that Ostojic 'already plays like a greatmaster.' This heightened my sense of challenge still further, as dealing with a greatmaster sounded an even tougher proposition than playing merely against a grandmaster ...

As I was in Monte Carlo, where gambling is perfectly legal, I gave overwhelming preference to the 'Tal' half of my style when psyching myself up for the battle ahead.



Adams-Ostojic
Monte Carlo Open 1967 (11)

The game had already been very lively, with sacrifice and counter-sacrifice, but at a critical moment Ostojic had made the wrong choice when faced with two defensive possibilities. By a twist of fate, during play, there had been a disturbance in the playing hall. Somebody had blurted out the breaking news, *'Fischer a perdu!'* – Bobby had just resigned against Geller – and suddenly it got noisy. I think Ostojic lost his concentration during the commotion and as a result he had landed in the present dangerous position. And I kept up the pressure with...

27.♗g6!

So if 27...hxg6 28.♖xg6 threatening 29.♕h5 mate.

27...♗e8 28.♗f7

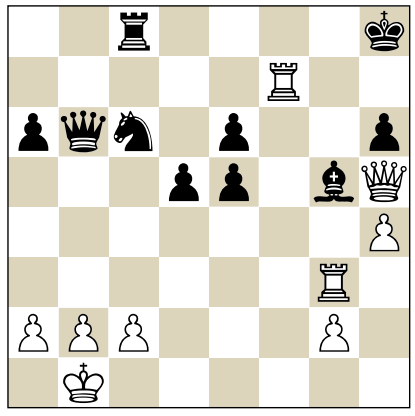
Now threatening mate on g8.

28...♗xf7 29.♖xf7 ♗g5 The threat was 30.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 31.♕h5 mate.

30.♕h5 h6 If 30...♕g8 31.♖xg5.

31.h4 Of course, 31.♕g6 ♕g8 32.♖xg5 wins material, but I did not want to exchange queens – I was playing for mate.

31...♕b6



32.♖f1

After the game Sultan asked me 'When he threatened the back rank mate, why didn't you play simply 32.a3 ?'

'Because of 32...♖b8 33.b3 ♕g1+ 34.♔a2 ♕c1', I replied in all innocence.

'But you can go 35.♕g6.'

'Then he has 35...♘b4+ 36.axb4 ♖xc2+ and I am lost.'

COLLECTION DANIEL DEMOL

The Sultan was not only *Le Maître de L'Attaque*, but also *un raconteur par excellence*.

'What do you mean? The rook is on b8.'

'Never mind', I joked, trying to conceal my embarrassment, 'they don't give brilliancy prizes for defensive moves!' (i.e. 35.♕g6 defended the c2-square).

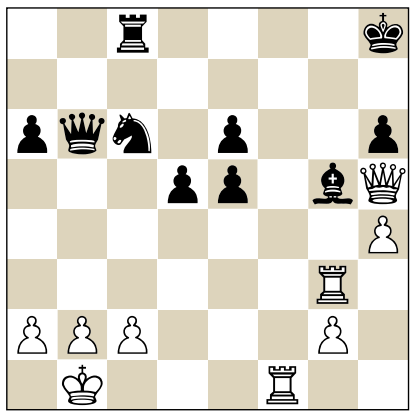
'Aha...', Sultan laughed, 'If it's the brilliancy prize you are after then you must play 33.♖f8+!'

'What?'

'Then 33...♖xf8 34.♖xg5 and he has no mate – but you have!'

At first this took some believing, but, sure enough, on 34...♖f1+ 35.♔a2 ♕c7 36.♕e8+ wins, while an immediate 34...♕c7 is defeated by 35.♕xh6+ ♕h7 36.♕xf8+. Black is surprisingly helpless.

In other words, I had messed up. Nevertheless, my own 'invisible' backward rook move also has its nice points, as this piece can still take a decisive role in the attack – not only from f1 but even the h1-square!



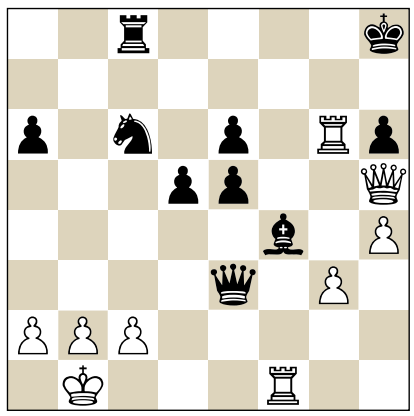
32...♗f4 33.♖g6

By now I was running short of time and wanted to take what I thought was the most straightforward path: 34.♖xh6+ ♗xh6 35.♕xh6+ ♔g8 36.♕xe6+ and ♕xc8, whilst also hoping for 33...♔h7 34.♖xh6+! ♗xh6 35.♖f7+, winning at once. The text also catered for 33...♘e7, met by 34.♖xh6+, then after 34...♗xh6 35.♕xh6+, without needing to think, I could check my way to the time-control, capturing the knight on e7 and the pawn on e5 en route – and win easily with my two connected passed pawns on the kingside.

But, afterwards, in the analysis room, Sultan showed me a more efficient way to victory by 33.♖g5!. Placing the rook 'en prise' to the h-pawn would also have been a nice echo of move 27, where the bishop was placed 'en prise' to the same pawn. If 33…♗xg5 34.hxg5 ♕c7 35.♕xh6+ ♕h7 36.♕f6+ ♕g7 37.♖h1+! wins.

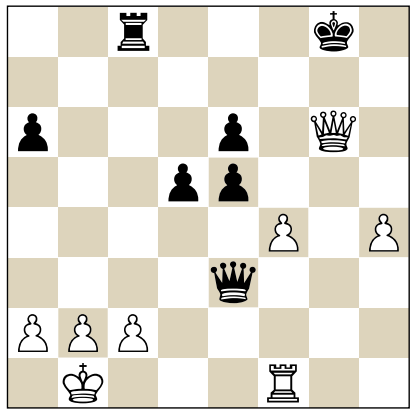
33...♕e3 To give additional protection to the h6-pawn.

34.g3!



34...♘e7 If 34...♖g8, then 35.gxf4 ♖xg6 36.♕xg6 exf4 37.♖g1 wins. And 34...♖b8 35.gxf4 ♖xb2+ 36.♔xb2 ♕b6+ 37.♔c1 ♕e3+ 38.♔d1 ♕d4+ 39.♔e2 ♕c4+ 40.♔f2 ♕xc2+ 41.♔g1 leaves Black with no more worthwhile checks.

35.gxf4 ♘xg6 36.♕xh6+ ♔g8 37.♕xg6+



Here, even before we had reached the time control, Ostojic extended his

hand in gentlemanly fashion, seeing not only that 37...♔h8 38.♕h6+ ♔g8 39.♕xe6+ ♔g7 40.♕xc8 is hopeless but also that 37...♔f8 38.fxe5+ ♔e7 39.♖f7+ ♔d8 40.♕g8 is mate. The g2-pawn has travelled to e5 and denied the black king a refuge on d6! This exciting game was rich in tactical ideas but lacking in accuracy, as shown by Sultan's analytical revelations. Therefore I never had any thoughts of entering it for the Beauty Prize competition.

So Predrag Ostojic lost in the final round but still won the Open with 9½/11, ahead of an undefeated Piet van der Weide (father of present-day grandmaster Karel van der Weide) 8½, with Zhivko Kaikamdjozov of Bulgaria and myself on 8. Again, I must acknowledge the role that Bobby Fischer had played in my final placing.

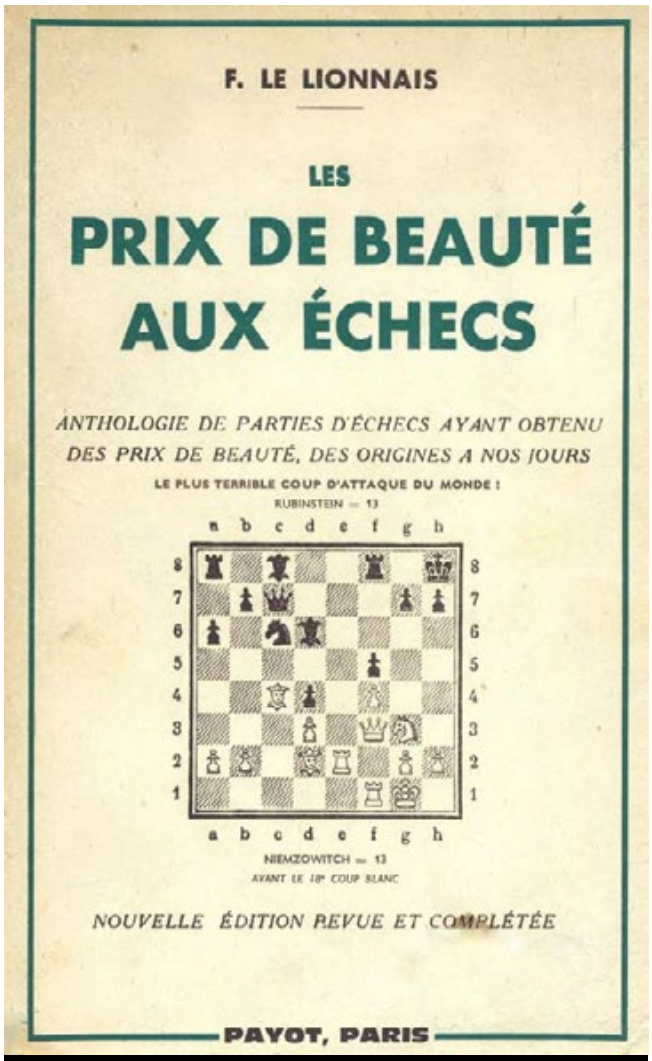
The Beauty Prize

A rich prize was offered for the most beautiful game played in Monte Carlo. The judges were François Le Lionnais, Count Alberic O'Kelly de Galway and the French master Dr Michel Roos.

There could not have been a more appropriate sponsor for this prize than Monsieur Le Lionnais, as he had written a loveable book, *Les Prix de Beauté aux Échecs*, in which he annotated all the official Beauty Prize winning games since this concept was first introduced in 1876.

Le Lionnais was a chemical engineer by profession but, in addition to science, he was passionately interested in the arts, mathematics and of course chess. He was also a major collector and in his life amassed a library of 25,000 books, of which about ten per cent were on chess.

In the Second World War he had operated as a saboteur in the French Resistance, until he was captured by the Gestapo. Though he was then held in horrific conditions in a large prison at Fresnes, south of Paris, he used his guile to establish a rapport with


F. LE LIONNAIS
LES
PRIX DE BEAUTÉ AUX ÉCHECS
ANTHOLOGIE DE PARTIES D'ÉCHECS AYANT OBTENU DES PRIX DE BEAUTÉ, DES ORIGINES A NOS JOURS
LE PLUS TERRIBLE COUP D'ATTAQUE DU MONDE !
KUBINSTEIN — 13
NIEMZOWITCH — 13
AVANT LE 18e COUP BLANC
NOUVELLE ÉDITION REVUE ET COMPLÉTÉE
PAYOT, PARIS

In his classic anthology, Le Lionnais laid down the Seven Commandments for Chess Beauty.

a German sergeant and this was to have a remarkable outcome. Having learned that the sergeant was a chess player, eager to prove himself the best amongst his colleagues, he provided him with advice on how to win a critical adjourned game. After this success the sergeant continued to seek his prisoner's advice.

Le Lionnais then took the matter one stage further by offering to write a treatise on chess for the sergeant, in order to help him improve his play. Moreover, after the War was over, he would have the right to publish the manuscript and make some money for himself. All his captive wanted in return was pen, ink and paper. The sergeant duly swallowed the bait and Le Lionnais used the materials he was given, not only to write *The Labyrinth of Chess* but also, more importantly, to pass on secret messages to fellow prisoners throughout the jail – particularly with regard to anti-interrogation techniques.

However, one favour the sergeant could not grant Le Lionnais was his request to release him from the handcuffs, while he wrote the *Labyrinth* – this alone makes the work quite unique!

Shortly after completing the *Labyrinth* and giving it to the sergeant, Le Lionnais was deported to Dora, a subterranean work complex adjoining the infamous Buchenwald concentration camp. But, unlike Buchenwald, inmates at Dora were worked to death, rather than exterminated, and Le Lionnais owed his survival to his great mental discipline. Moreover, his scientific know-how even enabled him to carry out sabotage inside Dora. It was a production line for V2 rockets, and he would discreetly tamper with them so they would fall short of their target and land somewhere in the English Channel, instead of causing devastation on the streets of London.

Astonishingly, the *Labyrinth* manuscript survived the ravages of war and was later returned to Le Lionnais by the French Ministry of Defence. In turn the author donated it to the Musée de la Deportation at Les Invalides in Paris.

In the post-war period, Le Lionnais was one of the original fifteen members of 'Euratom', a committee set up in 1962 to establish the first chess computer program. Also serving on that panel, as President, was former world champion Max Euwe. We have come a long way since then, although when Le Lionnais delivered a lecture on chess computing during the Monte Carlo tournament, he also had the foresight to express his fears about the changes to which chess would be subjected by the power of the machines.

■ ■ ■

Returning to the matter of the Beauty Prize, in *Les Prix de Beauté aux Échecs*, Le Lionnais had methodically laid down the criteria to justify making such an award. These criteria were:

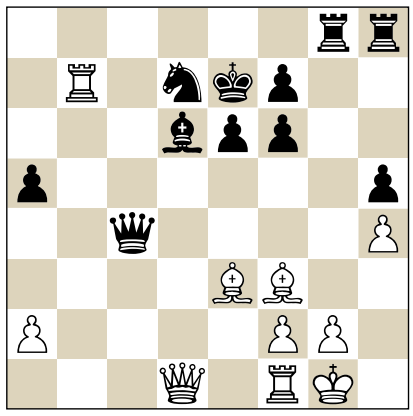
1. Correctness (of the first kind)
A refutable combination can perhaps be evidence of a worthy mental effort. But in no way can it be considered as beautiful.
2. Correctness (of the second kind)
As ingenious as it may be, a combination cannot be considered beautiful if there is available another combination that forces the win in a shorter way.
3. Difficulty
A game is all the more beautiful if the two adversaries create more difficulties and foil the manoeuvres confronting them.
4. Brilliance
A game is all the more beautiful if it contains the least number of dull moves and the greatest number of spectacular moves (the exception being moves made according to opening theory which can be established by the date the game was played).
5. Originality
A game or a combination that has already been admired for its beauty cannot be considered a candidate to receive a prize if it is a repeat of another game.
6. Richness
A game is all the more beautiful if it contains a greater number of different combinations.
7. Unity
A game is more beautiful when all its blows, manoeuvres and combinations are subordinate to an overall single and justified plan.

However, in practice and as indeed shown by the games in his book, it was a tall order to meet all these criteria. The chessboard is such a wild world, with so many unexpected happenings, that it is extremely difficult for any player to retain absolute control of events and create a perfect work of art.

I too felt that I had fallen short of the standards required, but by the end of the tournament I was nevertheless very curious to hear the judges' decision.

■ ■ ■

And so it was, when judgement day finally arrived, the panel announced that the winner of the Beauty Prize had come not from the Grandmasters tournament but from the Masters.



Karaklajic-Bhend
Monte Carlo Masters 1967 (4)

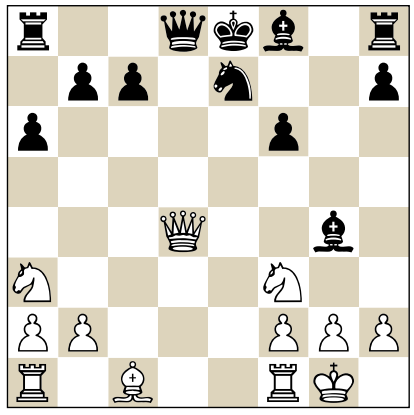
Karaklajic had played the whole game very stylishly, but his opponent had hung on with great determination.
29...♕xh4? In his eagerness to threaten mate on h2, Bhend loses the game at once. 29...♖b8! would have prevented the following combination and left the result of the game in doubt. **30.♕xd6+! ♔xd6 31.♖d1+ ♔e7** Now 31…♔e5 allows 32.♖b5+. **32.♖dxd7+ ♔e8 33.♖e7+** And Black resigned in view of 33...♔f8 34.♖xf7+ ♔e8 35.♗c6+ ♔d8 36.♖b8 mate, or 33...♔d8 34.♗b6+ ♔c8 35.♖ec7+ ♔d8 36.♖b8 mate.

So, in retrospect, it was a controversial award – even by Le Lionnais' own standards. The panel had failed to recognise that it was only because of Bhend's blunder on the 29th move that his opponent was able to carry out the queen sacrifice.

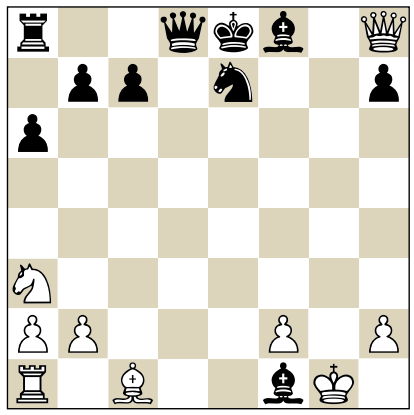
It was the former New Zealand and British Champion, Bob Wade, who first pointed out the flaw in the prize-winning game. However, being modest by nature, he was not too critical of the jury. Instead he half-joked: 'They chose the wrong Karaklajic game!' He was suggesting that the following precisely calculated little gem should have been given the prize, even though it would have been at his own expense!

RL 8.12 – C69
Bob Wade
Nikola Karaklajic
Monte Carlo Masters 1967 (5)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗xc6 dxc6 5.0-0 f6 6.c3 c5 7.♘a3 ♘e7 8.d4 cxd4 9.cxd4 exd4 10.e5?
Better to recapture on d4, though Black remains with the two bishops.
10...♗g4 11.exf6 gxf6 12.♕xd4

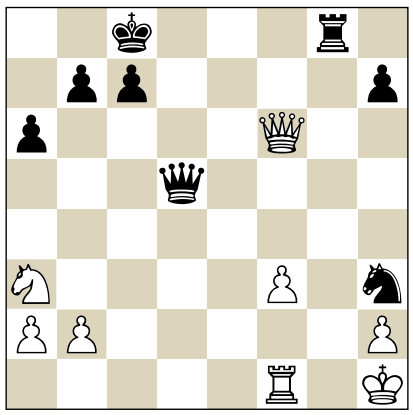


12...♗xf3! 13.♕xf6 ♗xg2!
Cut and thrust. White was hoping for 13...♖g8 14.♕xf3 when he remains a pawn ahead.
14.♕xh8 Taking the bishop is also hopeless: 14.♔xg2 ♖g8+ 15.♔h1 ♕d3 16.♖e1 ♖d8 17.f3 ♖d6 18.♕c3 ♕f5 19.♕b3 ♖dg6 20.♕xb7 ♕h3 or 20.♗d2 ♖g2 wins.
14...♗xf1



15.♗h6
Bob Wade was relying on this counter-attack. There is no comfort in 15.♔xf1 ♕d1+ 16.♔g2 ♕g4+ 17.♔f1 0-0-0 18.♗e3 ♗g7 19.♕xh7 ♗xb2.
15...♕d5! 16.♖xf1 0-0-0 17.♗xf8 ♘g6 18.♕g7
If 18.♕xh7 ♘f4 19.f3 ♕g5+ 20.♔f2 ♖d2+ 21.♔e3 ♘d5+ 22.♔e4 ♘f6+

and the king is mated in the middle of the board!
18...♖xf8 19.f3 ♖g8 20.♕f6 ♘f4+
White resigned. After 21.♔h1 ♘h3!



provides an aesthetic finish. Remarkably, after all that wood-chopping, material is still level – but what a marked contrast there is between the two knights, each perched on the edge of the board! White's knight has remained out of play for the whole game, whereas Black's plays an active role in a concluding mating attack. If now 22.♕h4 ♕xf3+! 23.♖xf3 ♖g1 mate or 22.♘c2 ♘f2+! 23.♖xf2 ♕d1 mates.

However, when all was said and done, the prevailing overall opinion in Monte Carlo was that it was Ostojic who should have won the Beauty Prize, for his brilliant play against the French player, Morera, which, incidentally, was the only game from the Open to make an appearance in the daily bulletin.

■ ■ ■

Belgian Grandmaster O'Kelly de Galway was the major force in deciding the Beauty Prize. He was renowned for his analytical skills, which were very much in evidence when he won the World Correspondence Championship in 1962, and he was also the principal annotator of games for the magazine *Europe Echecs*, who were responsible for the general organisation of the tournament.

O'Kelly was awarded the grandmaster title in 1956, the same year as Larsen and Kortchnoi, and was a disciplined, cultured, well-educated man who had a command of no less than seven languages, which made him an ideal Chief Arbiter for an international tournament like Monte Carlo. I had the opportunity to see O'Kelly at work. Every evening he would sit alone, privately going through the best games of the day, using a chess

'However, O'Kelly did occasionally miss some significant points in his analysis, as became apparent when he judged the Beauty Prize entries.'

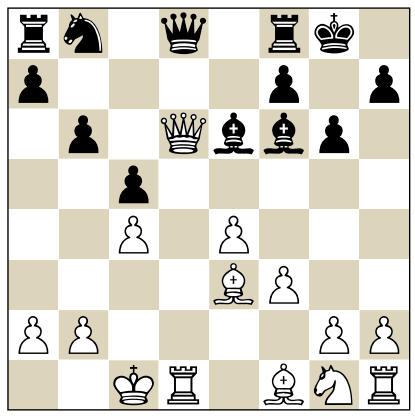
set on a small table which he had buffered up against the stage, so nobody could sit opposite him! He would stop every now and then to think – as if it were a real game. Occasionally, he would move a few pieces when double-checking the analysis in his head, but then quickly restore the position on the board. He was either preparing for his game demonstrations, looking at submissions for the Beauty Prize or writing out annotations for *Europe Echecs* or some newspaper or other.

Both his written and verbal commentaries were very clear and easy to follow for amateurs. However, he did occasionally miss some significant points in his analysis, as became apparent when he judged the Beauty Prize entries.

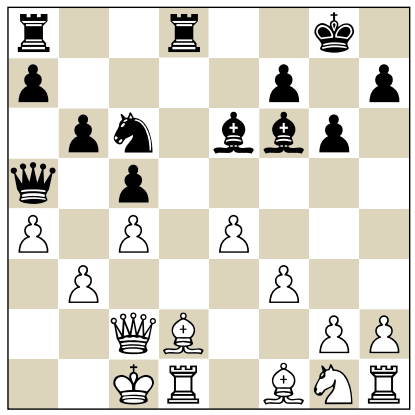
■ ■ ■

KI 48.9 – B06
Bonaventure Morera
Predrag Ostojic
Monte Carlo Open 1967 (9)

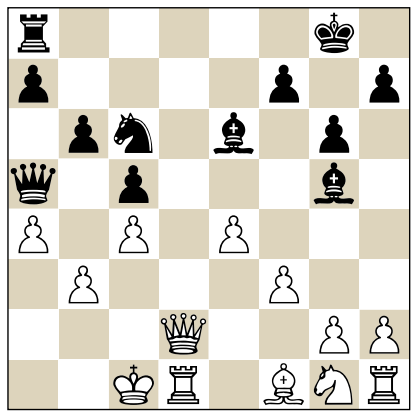
1.d4 g6 2.e4 ♗g7 3.c4 c5 4.d5 d6 5.♘c3 ♘f6 6.f3 0-0 7.♗e3 b6 8.♕d2 e6 9.0-0-0 exd5 10.♘xd5 ♗e6 A classic pawn sacrifice to exploit Black's lead in development.
11.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 12.♕xd6



12...♕c8! In this way Ostojic fully justifies his offbeat use of the ...b7-b6 move.
13.♕d2 ♘c6 14.b3 ♕a6! 15.a4 ♖fd8 16.♕c2 ♕a5 17.♗d2



17...♖xd2! 18.♕xd2 ♗g5!
The point.



19.♕xg5

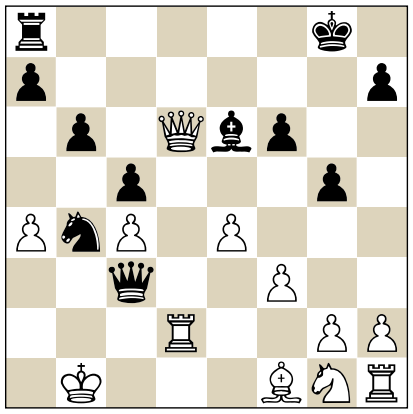
An 'invisible' defence, overlooked by O'Kelly when considering entries for the Beauty Prize, lay in 19.f4! ♗xf4 20.♕xf4 ♕c3+ 21.♔b1 ♕xb3+ 22.♔c1 ♕c3+ 23.♔b1, when Black must take the perpetual or else risk defeat after 23...♘b4 24.♖d2 ♕b3+ 25.♖b2 ♕d1+ 26.♕c1.

19...♕c3+ 20.♔b1 ♕xb3+ 21.♔c1 ♕c3+ 22.♔b1 ♘b4

Threatening 23...♕c2+ and mate.

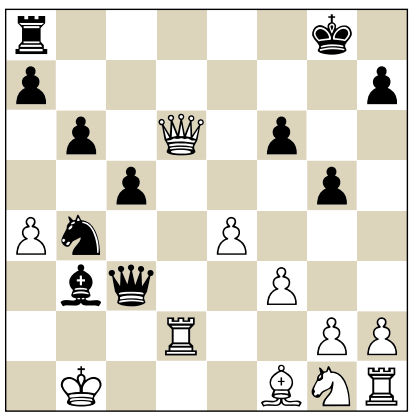
23.♖d2 f6! To divert the queen from its defence of the rook on d2.

24.♕f4 g5! 25.♕d6 Still managing to cover the rook, but ...



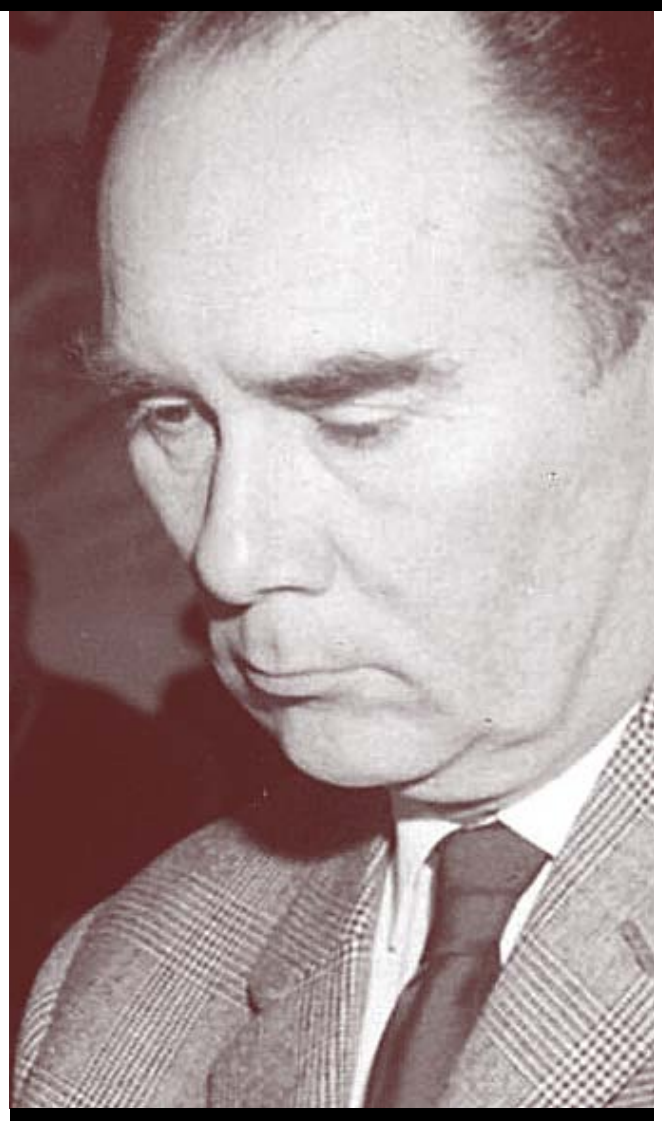
25...♗d5!! Breaking the line of communication between queen and rook. If now 26.cxd5 ♕xd2 27.♕e6+ ♔g7 28.♕e7+ ♔g6 wins.

26.♖e2 ♗xc4 27.♖d2 ♗b3



28.♗c4+ In his commentary, O'Kelly again missed the best defence for White, which lay in 28.♗d3!, since 28...♕xd2 29.♗c4+ ♘d5 30.♗xd5+ ♗xd5 31.♕xd5+ ♕xd5 32.exd5 leaves White a knight ahead.

Instead Black can play 28...♗a2+ 29.♖xa2 ♕b3+ 30.♔c1 ♘xd3+ 31.♔d2 ♘b4, recovering the rook with a probable long term win.

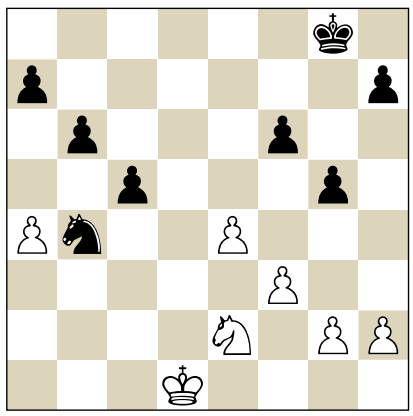


Chief Arbiter O'Kelly de Galway: 'My decision is final.'

28...♗xc4? O'Kelly said it was this error that cost Ostojic the Beauty Prize. Indeed, the game would be concluded far more quickly after 28...♕xc4! 29.♔b2 ♗c2 forcing 30.♕d5+ to stop mate.

29.♘e2! Now Black has to enter a favourable endgame – in which he displays effective technique.

29...♗d3+ 30.♕xd3 ♕xd3+ 31.♖xd3 ♘xd3 32.♔c2 ♖d8 33.♖d1 ♘b4+! 34.♔c1 ♖xd1+ 35.♔xd1



35...♔f7 36.♔d2 ♔e6 37.♘g3 a6 38.♔c3 b5 39.axb5 axb5 40.♘f5 ♘d5+ 41.♔c2 ♔e5 42.g3 c4 43.♘h6 ♘e3+ 44.♔c3 b4+ 45.♔xb4 ♔d4 White resigned.

So, a slightly flawed masterpiece but, since it ticked practically all the boxes of Le Lionnais' seven 'rules', it was a pity that the judges didn't award the Beauty Prize to Ostojic.

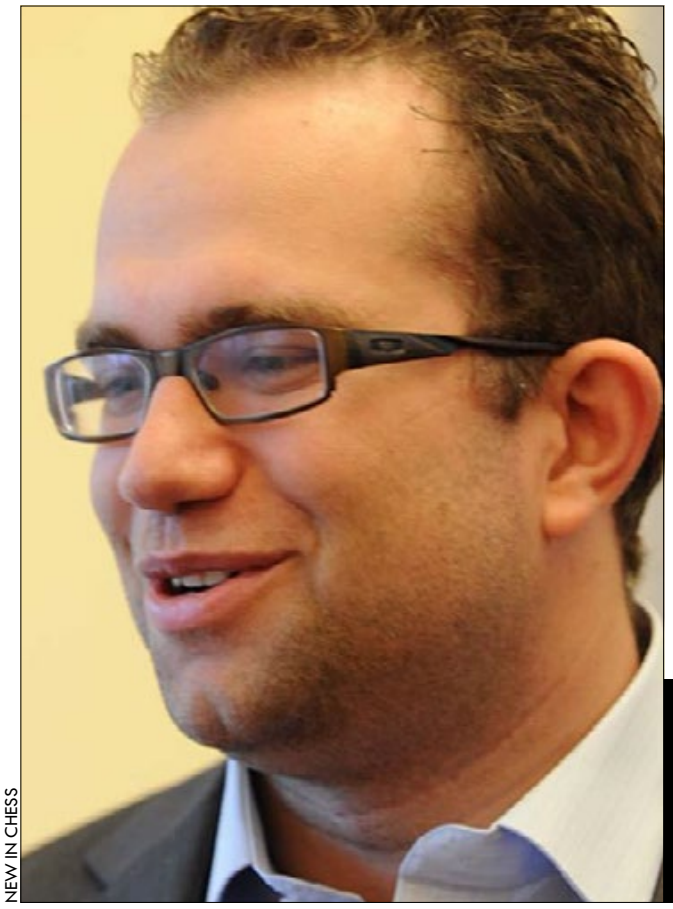
The following year Ostojic was runner up in the Monte Carlo Masters, which was sufficient to qualify him for the GM tournament in 1969. However he was by now in his mid-thirties and could not raise his level of play to compete successfully at this elite level.

He subsequently travelled widely, playing chess. In addition, he also served as an arbiter, trainer, journalist, and even a campaigner for pension rights for professional players.

Unfortunately, he met a tragic end. In 1996 it was reported that he had fallen out of the window of the high-rise apartment in Mainz, Germany, where he now lived. His cause of death was widely given as suicide, but fellow chess players did not believe this was the case. Indeed, while I was working on the book *I Play Against Pieces*, I asked the author, the late Svetozar Gligoric, what had really happened. He told me that just before the incident he had given Ostojic a lift in his car to Belgrade airport, en route to what was to be his final return to Mainz. Ostojic was not in the least depressed and was even talking enthusiastically about his future plans. There was no doubt in Gligoric's mind: 'He was pushed'.

Ominously, it was in Monte Carlo that Ostojic started to play roulette in the famous casino, after which gambling became a life-long addiction for him. In the end it appears that he accumulated debts that he was unable to meet. And then, inevitably, came payback time ...

Nevertheless, Monte Carlo 1967 remained Ostojic's all-time favourite tournament, although not for purely chess reasons. For the rest of his life he carried around in his wallet a photo of himself collecting his prize from Princess Grace – who, I strongly suspect, he considered far more beautiful than any chess game he ever played. ■



NEW IN CHESS

Pavel Eljanov: 'Wesley and I had played so many beautiful games and I couldn't have imagined that the reaction would be so strong!'

Taking the next step

When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' John 8, Verse 7

I've played about 1,500 games in my chess career. Among them were several memorable ones which received prizes for beauty. There were also quite a number of decisive ones – wins that brought me or my team victory or another place on the pedestal. But, strange as it may seem, none of those games came close to being worthy of the amount of attention I got for my three-move draw with Wesley So, which occurred in the last round of the Reykjavik Open this year!

On the quiet, grey evening before the last round I was sitting in my room in the three-star hotel Baron thinking about the tournament situation. Only the two of us were in the lead: Wesley and I. Below us was a fairly large group of pursuers, and I reckoned that one or two of the games in that group could end decisively. After analysing the figures for the additional indices I came to the conclusion that if I drew, I had about a 95-percent chance of sharing first place. Wesley was three points behind me (according to the Buchholz coefficient). The others, even if they won, had even less chance of overtaking me.

Bearing these conclusions in mind, I made a decision to play solidly, and if I got an equal position after the opening, be ready to offer a draw. After preparing a few strong but poisonous variations I went to sleep. The last round started much earlier than the others – at 12, as often happens even in super-tournaments.

The next day what happened, happened. Wesley, indicating his desire to play the Grünfeld, offered me a draw after the move 3...d5. Without thinking for very long I accepted the offer. Peter Doggers of ChessVibes (together with Ian Rogers – they were

reporting on the tournament) was one of the first to congratulate me on my victory in the tournament immediately after the end of that short game. I was slightly embarrassed and told him that 'I was prepared to play a little'. Even then I had kind of an unpleasant aftertaste after the draw. But Wesley and I had played so many beautiful games and I couldn't have imagined that the reaction would be so strong!

The first person to 'start throwing stones' at Wesley and me was Polish grandmaster Mateusz Bartel. Right after my game ended he started a discussion on Facebook in which we were condemned rather harshly. For me this was quite unexpected, as I'd always had a good relationship with Mateusz – for several years we played together for the German club SV Wattenscheid. During the discussion it became clear that he himself wasn't 'without sin', as on more than one occasion he had offered a draw at the very start of a game. That discussion fizzled out quite quickly, as a person who demands certain ideals should, at minimum, adhere to those ideals himself. I want to bring in a quote by Albert Einstein: 'The example of great and pure individuals is the only thing that can lead us to noble thoughts and deeds.' Then again, I know that Mateusz really is a very fighting player who rarely makes short draws. It's just that even the most fighting players sometimes do themselves a favour and offer to conclude a peace even at the opening stage of the game. It's all very simple: we are people and sometimes our strength is exhausted.

The day after the tournament ended an article by grandmaster Ian Rogers appeared in the American magazine *Chess Life Online*, in which he subjected Wesley and me to scathing criticism. After reading that article I thought that the criticism was, at minimum, non-objective, and I decided to reply to the author on my Facebook page. Suspecting that my reply might be too emotional, I decided that I wouldn't publish my text openly (which I confirmed when I said no to Peter Doggers, who offered to publish it on his site ChessVibes).

The three-move draw that decided this year's Reykjavik Open led to heated discussions. After the dust had settled we invited **Pavel Eljanov** to present his view on what happened and the conclusions he drew. We also asked him to annotate one of his spectacular fighting games that made him the deserved winner in the Icelandic capital.

'According to my database, Ian made several dozen short draws in his career, of which about 15 lasted 10 moves or less.'

But I couldn't believe it when the next day I found that my text had been copied immediately by several internet outlets without my permission! Funnily enough, my text received a multitude of positive comments and served as a spark (or defined a new direction) for a heated debate about the problem of short draws in general, which went on for several days.

I'll allow myself to quote Ian from his article in the magazine *64*: 'As a result the sides split into three (sometimes intersecting) groups. The first are convinced that short draws are part of chess. The second think that it isn't the players who are to blame, but the organizers, who have to take measures to prevent short draws. Then again, they admit that if two players want to make a quick draw, they'll make it. Finally, the third group of people think that players who are at the centre of attention are obliged to play at full strength in any situation for the sake of the game itself and the chess fans who follow the events.'

As is apparent from the previous paragraph, *Chess Life Online* wasn't the only outlet where Mr. Rogers reported on the tournament in Reykjavik (and expressed his opinion about our draw). Not without pleasure (without any sarcasm) I read the whole of his long article for the magazine *64*. I also saw his comments on the site ChessVibes.com and in an Australian chess forum.

Based on everything Mr. Rogers wrote, I came to the conclusion that, written hot on the heels of the article in *CLO*, it was nevertheless too emotional (much like my text on Facebook). So now that the feelings have already died down, I don't see any point in discussing everything that

was written in detail. Instead I'd like to point out a couple of things that are important, in my view, and discuss the problem of short draws in general.

The first thing I'd like to do is apologize to chess fans who felt insulted. To apologize for the fact that we didn't just make a short draw, but a short draw in three moves, which of course looked questionable. We didn't want to insult anyone. I could have replied with a refusal, made another 10 or 12 moves following theory without any risk and offered a draw myself, which would have had a huge probability of being accepted. In essence that wouldn't have changed anything, but it's unlikely that it would have provoked so much criticism.

Now, about what Mr. Rogers wrote. At the end of his article in *CLO* Ian writes: 'During my playing career I made a modest number of short draws (though never prearranged). To the spectators I disappointed, I apologize.' According to my database, Ian made several dozen short draws in his career, of which about 15 lasted 10 moves or less. Ian thinks that short draws at decisive moments are particularly dubious from a moral point of view and that since I had the white pieces I should have fought for first place outright. Here it's difficult for me to agree with him.

Firstly, for a number of reasons it was very important for me to take first place. Outright or by coefficient – there was no difference for me, as in any case a victory in this tournament was a trophy! Secondly, I always thought that short draws at the beginning or middle of a tournament, when you should have strength in abundance, are often a sign of cowardice or weakness. In Reykjavik I strictly followed my principles for the first nine rounds, and it's no exaggeration to say that I fought to the last bullet. So I probably thought that I'd earned a solid 'loyalty credit' from the organizers and public opinion. Then again, the organizers, including Gunnar Bjornsson, who is also president of the Icelandic Chess Federation, actually stood up for Wesley and me. For which I'm very grateful.

I can give an example of when I personally suffered from my ultra-fighting inclination. In 2005 I qualified for the World Cup for the first time. The tournament started very successfully for me. In the first round I defeated the American grandmaster Kudrin. In the second round I was up against my former Kharkov compatriot Mikhail Gurevich, and I confidently won our first game as Black. In the second game I decided to act just as decisively, and in the worst case for me I would force him to make a draw from a position of strength – as the advantage of the first move in this situation is a very serious factor. We played the Dutch. Following my inclination I avoided simplifications, each time choosing the most principled continuations. My mistake was that a very double-edged situation came about: a draw was enough for me, but I was maintaining the tension. Somewhere in my subconscious this probably disturbed me and my play ceased to be seamlessly integrated. Unsurprisingly, at some point in an ordinary but complex position I couldn't withstand the tension and came under a crushing attack. I lost the match, of course – Misha didn't give me a chance in the tiebreak. Later he won a few more matches and qualified for the Candidates' Matches.

'In Reykjavik I strictly followed my principles for the first nine rounds, and it's no exaggeration to say that I fought to the last bullet.'

If I had embarked on a huge battle with Wesley and also lost in the end, I doubt that this would have brought me much acclaim. In the best case I would have deserved a couple of comforting pats on the shoulder from my colleagues, and the next day I doubt anyone would have remembered me.

Dirk Jan's commentary in New In Chess 2013/2 is called 'Mentality'. From my point of view this is a very good title, as the main lesson that I've taken from this story is probably how big the difference is between the conventional Western and Eastern mentalities in the chess world. My parents are modern people for whom, although they lived a significant part of their life in the USSR, the idea of socialism was always foreign. Nevertheless, I was raised in the traditions of the Soviet school of chess, where various kinds of short and prearranged draws were fairly standard. Yes, I always disliked this approach and usually tried to fight with all my strength even against opponents who were my friends away from the chess board. But one way or another I have a grain of that mentality inside me.

I'm completely in agreement with Dirk Jan that although chess has become much more fighting, there are still ways to improve the situation. Players should be prepared to play all their games in a tournament: 10 out of 10 or 13 out of 13, it makes no difference. But at the same time, I think that quick draws will sometimes be encountered in the games even of the most uncompromising players – I gave some examples in my text on Facebook. That's the nature not only of the game of chess, but also of sport in general, where individual sportsmen or whole teams

often minimize risk on the 'finishing straight'.

It isn't easy to find direct analogies with other sports, as draw offers only exist in chess. But I'll risk suggesting an example. If we compare a typical nine-round chess tournament with a 90-minute football match, we often see a similar picture: the team that needs to hold onto a result hunkers down near the goal and often plays without attackers. No, often the fans don't like this very much, but after the result is achieved, they're happy! Moreover, many football experts admit that virtually the only tactic that has a chance of success against today's great Barcelona is the tactic that's usually known as 'parking the bus in the penalty box'!

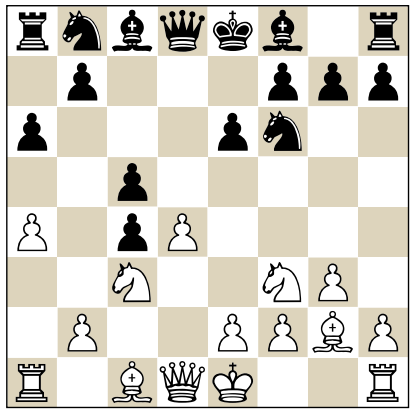
As for the Sofia rules and their modifications, I welcome their use in super-tournaments where grandmasters get decent starting pay, then take on the corresponding obligations. As for open tournaments, of course it's the prerogative of the organizers to decide whether to use them or not. But I don't see much point in doing so. The players get much more modest conditions, while often having to play two games a day. To ensure observance of the rules on every board at a tournament like the Reykjavik Open with more than 200 players you have to hire several more arbiters. My friend Runar Berg (a two-metre giant), who was one of the arbiters at Reykjavik, complained to me at the end of the tournament that he was dead tired after covering several dozen kilometres during the tournament.

One way or another, I'm even happy that this whole story happened to me. Yes, it cost me some nerve cells, but I gained invaluable experience. I always try to grow as a person and a player – step by step. Not suddenly, but carefully. I think that now I've taken the next step – I've started to understand the chess world better. In conclusion, another quote from Albert Einstein: 'Try not to become a man of success, but rather to become a man of value.'

NOTES BY
Pavel Eljanov

SL 3.1 – D15
Ivan Cheparinov
Pavel Eljanov
Reykjavik Open 2013 (6)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6 5.a4 e6 6.g3 dxc4 7.♗g2 c5

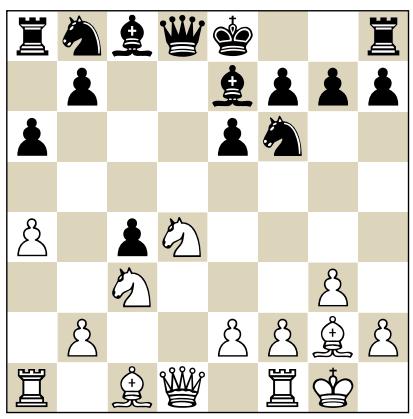


8.0-0!?

A move introduced by Kramnik in last year's tournament in London, where he won a fine game against McShane. Previously 8.dxc5 ♕xd1+ 9.♘xd1 was considered obligatory, but after Karjakin's strong 2009 novelty 9...♗d7! it became clear that White had only a symbolic advantage, and those wishing to go in for this Catalan-type endgame became fewer.

8...cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♗e7!?

McShane played 9...♘bd7, which in my view is less flexible. After the game continuation I retain the possibility of later developing the knight (or even the bishop, which I tried to do in the game) at a more active position – c6.

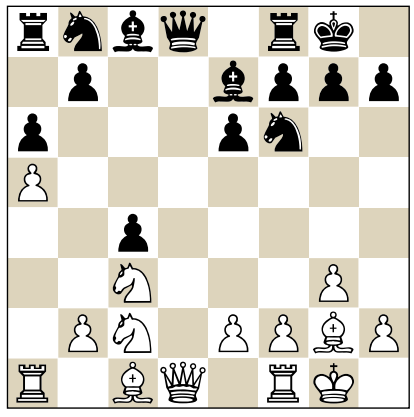


10.a5

The critical continuation – White is playing for a bind.

After 10.♘c2 my idea would in fact have gone into operation: 10...♘c6! 11.♘e3 ♘a5, and Black has not even a hint of any problems.

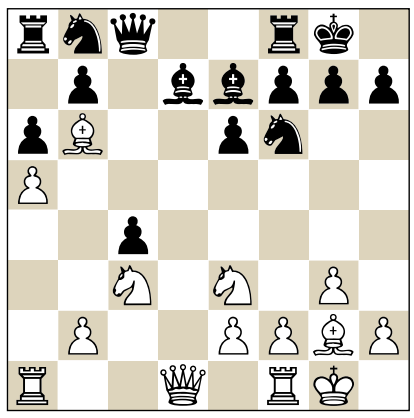
10...0-0 11.♘c2



11...♕c7

Here, too, 11...♘c6 was possible. This version is more advantageous for White, since he has occupied the important a5-square. Nevertheless, after 12.♕xd8 ♖xd8 13.♘e3 there is the fanciful move 13...♖d4!?, after which it is not easy for White to find anything better than the repetition of the position after 14.♘c2 ♖d8.

12.♗e3 ♗d7 13.♗b6 ♕c8 14.♘e3



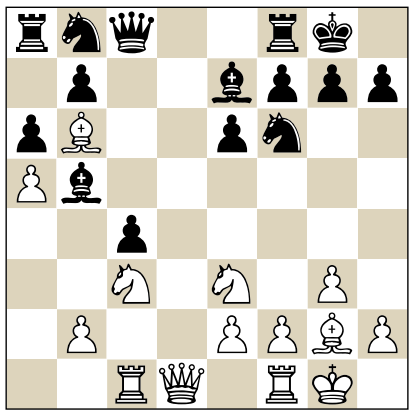
14...♗b5!?

The most fighting move and objectively the strongest. Initially I was intending to play 14...♗c6, which is also not bad, but White nevertheless retains some pressure after 15.♗xc6 ♘xc6 16.♘xc4 e5 17.♘d5 ♕e6 18.♘ce3.

15.♖c1

A turning point in the game. I thought for a long time and I found a very

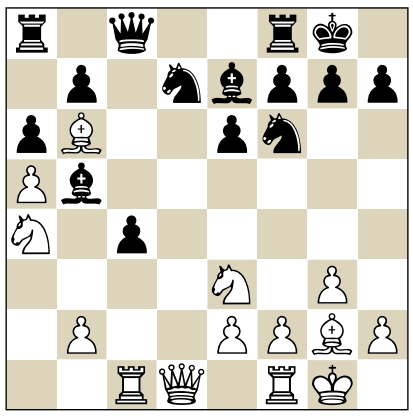
interesting idea, which in the end brought me victory.



15...♘fd7?!

Here many commentators attached a simple '!' sign, although an objective evaluation of the move is probably closer to '?'. Such a great difference in evaluations is explained by the fact that even a powerful computer cannot instantly work out the resulting sharp variations. In addition, for us theory had concluded very quickly and therefore on each move in such a complicated position we both spent a great deal of time, as a result of which the imminent threat of time-trouble added to the tension.

Initially I was intending to play 15...♘bd7, but after 16.♘a4 the variations which I considered during the game did not satisfy me:



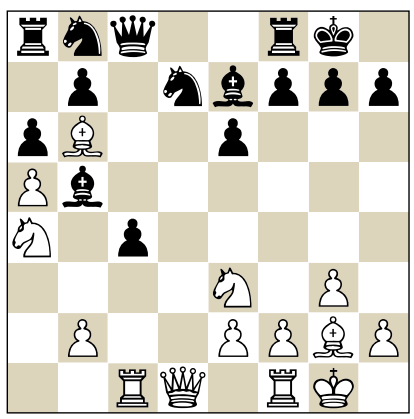
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 16...♖b8, when White can make a draw if he wishes, but he has the possibility of fighting for an advantage by 17.♘xc4 ♗xc4 18.b3 ♘xb6 19.axb6 e5 20.♖xc4 ♕e6 21.♕d2, which is again close to '=' according to the computer, but from the human point of view Black's position is completely hopeless;

B) 16...♘e5!. The best move, which I overlooked. The entire idea closely resembles that which I played in the game, but here my pieces are more harmoniously placed: 17.f4 (17.♗d4 ♕c7! and Black extricates himself) 17...♘ed7 18.♗d4 ♕e8! 19.♘xc4 ♖d8 with comfortable play.

16.♘a4

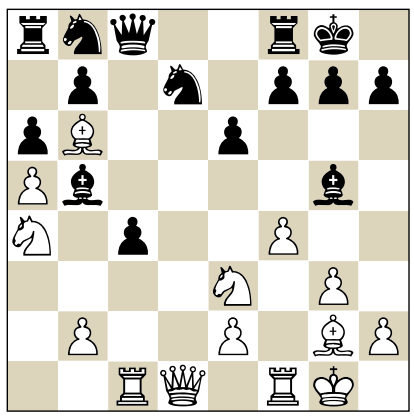
I also considered 16.♘xc4 and I thought that this led to an advantage for Black. This is not altogether so: 16...♕xc4 17.♗xb7 ♗c6 18.b3 ♕b4 19.♗xc6 ♘xb6 20.♗xa8 ♘xa8 and here White has 21.♘d5!, which leads to a completely equal position after 21...exd5 22.♕xd5 ♘b6 23.axb6 ♕xb6.



16...♗g5!

The point of my idea – to provoke a weakening of the kingside.

17.f4

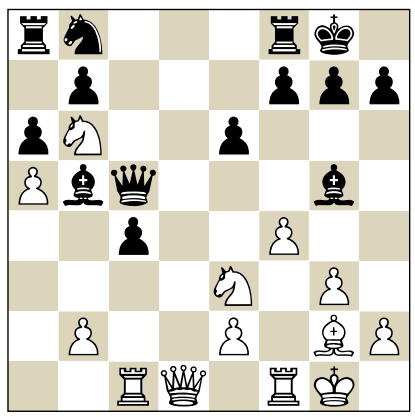


17...♘xb6!?

'Lightning from a clear sky' and '!!' – these were the sort of plaudits that this move received from many chess commentators. In the pre-computer era such assessments would have been readily accepted, but now, unfortunately, we have to reckon with the all-seeing eye of our silicon friend. Once again, objectively this is not the best move, and it was still possible to say 'pass' and agree to a slightly inferior position: 17...♗e7 18.♘xc4 ♘c6 19.♗f2, and White retains pressure.

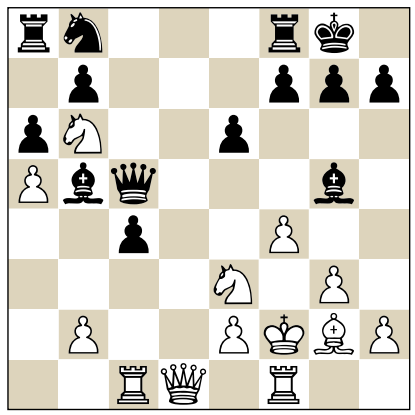
But this was not the reason why I embarked on all this.

18.♘xb6 ♕c5



19.♖f3?

With this move White loses a big advantage, which, however, would have been achieved only with the help of a series of intricate computer moves. It turns out that the best defender for the knight was His Majesty: 19.♔f2!. Now Black has two serious alternatives:

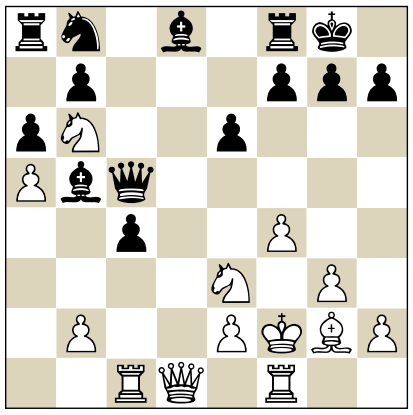


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 19...♗f6. In this variation it becomes clear why the king was the best defender for the knight. 20.♘xa8 ♖d8 21.♕b3!? (the most methodi-

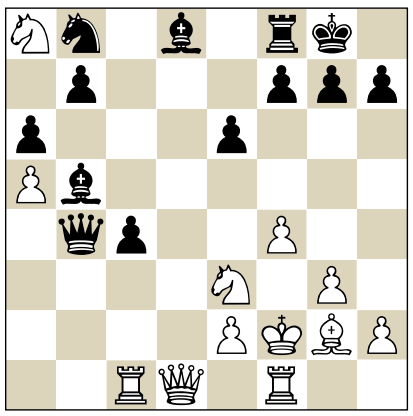
cal; 21.b4 is also possible, but here the position remains very sharp, although probably still better for White, after 21...♕xb4 22.♕c2 ♘c6 23.♘c7 ♘d4 24.♕c3 ♕c5 25.♘xb5 axb5 26.♖fd1) 21...♘c6 22.♕a3 ♕xa3 23.bxa3. With the rook on f3 in a similar variation which could have arisen in the game, Black had the strong resource 23...♘d4!. Here he does not, and White is simply the exchange up after 23...♖xa8 24.♘xc4;

B) 19...♗d8 is what I was intending to play:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

But here we probably both missed the brilliant intermediate move 20.b4!!, the idea of which looks completely incredible: one after another White sacrifices his queenside pawns – for the possibility of playing his queen to a7!: 20...♕xb4 21.♘xa8:



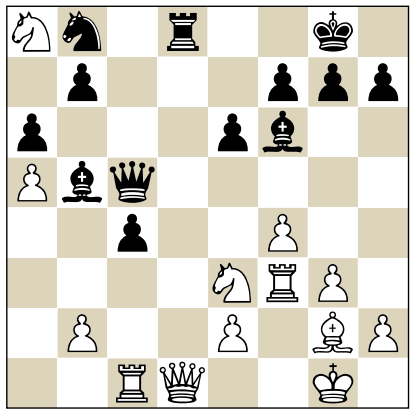
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

21...♗xa5 22.♕d4! (the point of White's idea) 22...♖d8 23.♕a7!. It turns out that on a7 the white queen is ideally placed, simultaneously defending both knights and the king. White neutralises Black's pressure and should gradually win.

19...♗f6 20.♘xa8

20.b4 is now insufficient: 20...♕xb4 21.♘xa8 ♘c6 22.♘c7 ♘d4 23.♘xb5 axb5.

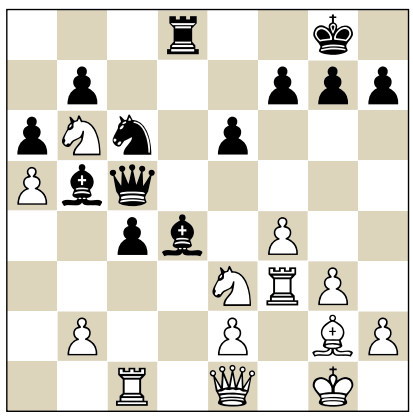
20...♖d8



21.♕e1

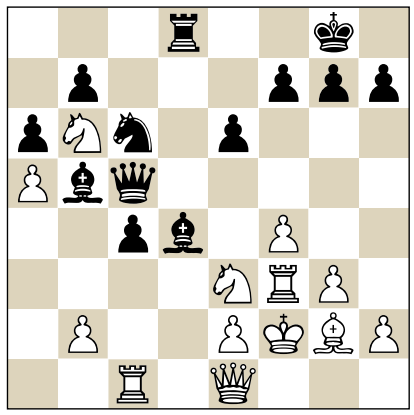
This does not lose, but it makes White's position very vulnerable. The familiar 21.♕b3 manoeuvre was the best decision from the practical point of view, and here 21...♘c6 22.♕a3 ♕xa3 23.bxa3 ♘d4! 24.♖f2 ♘b3. Now White has many possibilities, but one way or another they all lead to a draw, e.g. 25.♖e1 ♗d4 26.♘xc4 ♗xf2+ 27.♔xf2 ♗xc4 28.♘b6 ♘xa5 29.♘xc4 ♘xc4 30.♗xb7 ♘xa3 31.♗xa6 ♘c2.

21...♘c6 22.♘b6 ♗d4



23.♔f2?

White nevertheless cracks under the pressure! 23.♘xc4! was strictly the only possibility of holding the position: 23...♗xc4 24.♔f1! (not an easy move to find when short of time) 24...♗xe3 25.♖xc4 ♕xc4 26.♖xe3. Black is more actively placed, but he is not able to exploit this, and White gains a draw without difficulty: 26...h6 27.♖c3 ♕b5 28.♗xc6 bxc6 29.♕c1 ♕xa5 30.♖xc6.



23...e5!

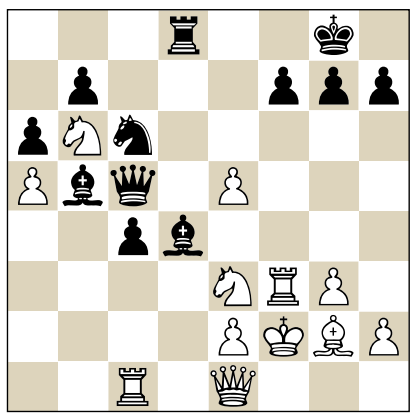
My favourite move in this game! The inclusion of this modest pawn marks the start of a decisive attack.

24.b4!?

This now familiar sacrifice becomes the last delay before capitulation.

24...♘xb4 25.fxe5 ♘c6!

Avoiding the trap 25...c3? 26.♔f1!.



26.♕d2?

This move was made in White's last seconds – panic. It was still possible to resist with 26.♘xc4 ♗xc4 27.♔f1! ♗xe3 28.♖xc4 ♕xe5!, although White's position is very difficult. Black's pieces dominate. For example, after 29.♖xe3 ♕xe3 30.♗xc6 bxc6 31.♖xc6 (31.♕b1!) 31...♕e4 32.♖xa6 h5! Black easily builds up a decisive attack.

26...c3 27.♕c2 ♘xe5 28.♕f5 g6 29.♕f4 ♖e8 30.♘d5 ♕xd5 31.♔f1 ♘xf3

White resigned. ■

Short Stories

Terror Tourism

Upholding tradition, March, for me, began with the boisterous bacchanal of the Bunratty Chess Festival. Pints a-plenty were downed both during and between rounds. By Saturday evening, as usual, any semblance of restraint had succumbed to excess – although perhaps not quite as much as last year, when one GM, who was still well in contention for first prize, after staggering to bed, distinctly sozzled, as dawn broke, failed to rouse himself in time for the fifth round.

The weekend tournament was deservedly won by Michael Adams, whose only major blunder was appropriating Bunratty to the UK in his victory speech. While by no means as life-threatening an error as Florencio Campomanes' 'It is a great honour for me to be here in Azerbaijan' – delivered while in the Armenian capital of Yerevan – this 'lapsus geographici' nevertheless caused winces of embarrassment, and he was gently and good-naturedly upbraided by the Irish Chess Union Chairman, Jonathan O'Connor.

Your columnist can count himself very lucky to have finished equal-second with 5/6. By coincidence, I played the aforementioned ICU Chairman in the first round. Partly psyched-out by the sight of Jonathan chatting to Guest of Honour Veselin Topalov in the bar prior to the game, I played a nervous and inept opening. Sensing a momentous upset, my opponent rapidly liquidated into an endgame a pawn up, instead of prosecuting what should have been a crushing attack. To his dismay, he discovered that not only was his modest material gain in jeopardy, but that he probably stood worse to boot. He wasn't allowed a second chance.

In the third round, I found myself in trouble again – this time against IM Richard Bates. After coming under ferocious positional pressure, I bailed out into a poor, but solid position an exchange for a pawn down, with some chances of holding. My adversary then began to drift a little aimlessly and I suddenly began to entertain thoughts of victory. At that precise moment, however, I put a bishop en prise. I held my breath, for what seemed like an eternity, trying not to give away anything. Richard obligingly failed to spot the accidental gift and the game eventually careened into a draw.

In round 4, I played white against a young lad from Bolton (where both David Norwood and I went to school), Joseph McPhillips. Notwithstanding the fact that he had just beaten Peter Wells in the previous round, it felt like a soft pairing. Belying the massive 558 point rating difference, my antagonist drew easily.

Recovering with a fifth round win over my namesake Philip Short – the strongest of the 4 Irish Short brothers, who were all playing in Bunratty – I then saved my best for last, downing Alexander Baburin in a pretty little endgame. After the closing ceremony came the semi-compulsory blitz tournament, which I won, probably because I was slightly less inebriated than most of the other competitors.

My Bunratty sojourns of the past few years have invariably been accompanied by simuls, which are deftly arranged by the genial Gary O'Grady of Blackthorne Transport – the main sponsor of the event. On this occasion, however, we had a last-minute cancellation, which left us with just one engagement – across the border, in Belfast.

To anyone brought up in Britain in the 1970s and 80s, Northern Ireland was synonymous with troubles (with a capital 'T'). Vicious sectarian violence, between Catholics and Protestants, made it about as desirable a destination as, say, Kabul is nowadays. Despite this (or perhaps because of it) I actually visited once, in my late teens, for a simul at a Ford car plant. My apprehensions about safety in the province proved unfounded: violence, even in the darkest days, tended to be confined to a few specific flashpoints. Ironically, I was brutally assaulted and left concussed, but only on my way home – outside the Arndale Centre in Manchester (which, by coincidence, was itself later blown up by a massive Irish Republican Army bomb).

Northern Ireland has been relatively peaceful since the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, but nevertheless one cannot escape reminders of recent turmoil. The Europa Hotel, where we stayed, has been bombed an astonishing 28 times since it opened in 1971.

This legacy of strife is doubtless the main reason why chess has languished in the province in recent decades. The unenviable legal position of the Ulster Chess Union (UCU) compounds the problems. As the region is part of the 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland' – to give the country of which I am a citizen its full title – it logically ought to be affiliated to the UK Chess Federation, except that none exists. As the UK anomalously already has five federations within FIDE (incidentally, in contravention of statute 2.1, which states 'Only one federation of each country can be affiliated to FIDE') the UCU has little or no chance to be accepted independently, as it already discovered in 2006. Realistically there are only two options available to escape from the present cul-de-sac: either to join the English Chess Federation or reaffiliate to the Irish Chess Union from which it seceded several years ago. The latter prospect is the more likely…

In brief, my simul at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution was a big event for a region starved of chess activity. It was superbly organised by Damien Cunningham, who ensured the event was covered on the 6 p.m. BBC 1 evening news. Radio Ulster provided periodic updates on the score. Alas, poor Damien discovered the bitter truth that one should never combine playing with supervising, as he dropped his queen, in a moment of absent-mindedness, as early as the fifth move.

After the event, in which I swept the board, we headed out for a kebab and some night-time 'terror tourism'. Gary O'Grady and I wanted to visit some of the infamous trouble-spots which we knew from television. As a local councillor, our driver, Damien Lavery, was very nervous. He kept stressing how essential it was to show absolute equality between communities. Merely being seen near some of these places could get him into political trouble…

We started off in the Loyalist stronghold of Shankill, with its murals of the Ulster Volunteer Force and Ulster Freedom Fighters, before moving on to headquarters of Sinn Fein (formerly invariably referred to as 'the political wing of the IRA' in Britain) in Andersonstown. We saw the exact spot where, in 1988, two Corporals were savagely beaten by a mob at a funeral procession (a sickening spectacle which was partly captured on camera) before being murdered with their own guns. We then went on to the Bobby Sands memorial, in Twinbrook, and the Marian Price protest mural in Falls Road. It was an exhilarating evening, but I may prefer something a little more sedate next time.

'I was asked by the main news channel if I would consider bringing my family to Iran on holiday. I answered, a touch undiplomatically, "Only when my wife doesn't have to wear the hijab".'

The next day I flew to Tehran. I had actually promised myself I would not go back until after the (next) revolution, but somehow I keep forgetting. Relations between Iran and the UK have been severed since the attack on the British Embassy in 2011. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office starkly 'advises against all travel to the whole country'. I figured that if I got into trouble I would ask Ben Affleck to come and get me out. Argo fuck yourself.

The occasion was a 'talking chess' match against Ehsan Ghaem Maghami. The concept, whereby the players think aloud on camera during the game, was the brain-child of Mehrdad Pahlevanzadeh – Treasurer of the Asian Chess Federation, although Ehsan himself was the primary organiser. As a method of popularizing the game, it has definite merit, but I felt the execution could have been improved. The players should have been in separate rooms and talking whenever they were not on the move, to provide a constant stream of consciousness. As it was, we were only periodically dragged away from the theatre stage.

I went down with a nasty viral infection (fever, sore throat, runny nose and aching limbs) right at the start, and consider myself very lucky to have triumphed 3-1. This was then followed up by rapid chess, which I also won 3-1. In blitz, I edged my younger opponent by 4½-3½. I fared somewhat better than Anatoly Karpov who, against the same opponent, in 2009, could only manage a tie, a tie and a defeat, across the three formats.

The match generated huge publicity in Tehran. I lost track of the number of interviews we did. On one occasion, I was asked by the main news channel if I would consider bringing my family to Iran on holiday. I answered, a touch undiplomatically, 'Only when my wife doesn't have to wear the hijab'. Mehrdad, my translator on this occasion, paused for a few seconds before continuing in Farsi. Afterwards, I expressed astonishment that he had dared to express my views. He replied, with a smile that he altered it to 'Only when my wife is ready to wear the hijab'. It's almost the same, he said.

Almost. But not quite. ■

Astana

At the Women's World Team Championship in Astana, top-seeds Ukraine lived up to expectations and took gold ahead of China and Russia, who lacked some of their best players. For Anna Ushenina it was the second world title in five months' time following her win in the World Cup in Khanty-Mansiysk. The new first lady of Ukrainian chess is getting used to being in the news, even if it's only because she changed the colour of her hair, but she has no airs and graces. In the capital of Kazakhstan she didn't mind settling for Board 2, scoring 6 out of 8, a 2588 performance, the highest of her team.

Olena Boytsun

When the World Board 2

Anna Ushenina and I were sitting in the lobby of the Radisson Blu Hotel in Kyiv. We were happy with the attention our exhibition game had attracted. For a nationwide audience we had played 'advanced chess', both of us had computer assistance, and playing white I had kept Anna to a draw. But it wasn't the result that counted, what counted was that lots of children had had a great afternoon. When I had invited Anna to take part in this event organized by my All-Ukrainian Charity Foundation 'Chess for Children', she hadn't hesitated a moment. Ever since she became World Champion, she feels it her duty to promote chess in Ukraine, particularly among children.

As we were sitting there, I noticed that my iPhone badly needed to be recharged, but I didn't have a charger with me. Seeing my problem, Anna immediately suggested I use hers, and handed it to me. My relief didn't last long, as I quickly noted that she had a brand-new iPhone 5 and that her charger was of little use for my iPhone 4s. The new mobile was a present from the Mayor of her native city of Kharkiv, Gennadiy Kernes. After her win of the world title she met several prominent politicians, not only representatives from her region, but also the Minister of Sport and Youth, Ravil Safiullin, and even the President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich. This

World Team Champions for the first time: Natalia Zhukova, Mariya Muzychuk, Kateryna Lahno, Inna Gaponenko and Anna Ushenina.

Champion plays

meeting resulted in a special gift, a new apartment in the centre of Kharkiv. On her return from Khanty-Mansiysk, Anna also got several national awards. In the category non-Olympic sports she was chosen as 2012 Ukrainian sports person of the year.

By now she has got used to the media attention that she attracts. The 11 TV cameras and the photographers that were swarming around us during our game could no longer disturb her. She's even got used to journalists that noticed she had changed the colour of her hair from brown to blond and duly reported on this metamorphosis. One week before our match Anna returned from yet another success. With the Ukrainian team she won the Women's World Team Championship in Astana. When the national team left for Kazakhstan from Kyiv's Zhulyany airport, spirits were high. They were the Elo-favourites and all the strong players took part: Kateryna Lahno, Anna Ushenina, Mariya Muzychuk, Natalia Zhukova and Inna Gaponenko. The average rating of the team was 2494, ahead of Georgia (2489), Russia (2484) and China (2472). Unfortunately,

China and Russia didn't appear in their strongest line-ups. China arrived without their two top ladies Hou Yifan and Zhao Xue, and Russia played without the Kosintseva sisters, who declined to take part because of a disagreement with Russian coach Sergey Rublevsky. However, even without these stars, the teams of China and Russia were ahead of Ukraine during the first four rounds. One would suppose that the 3-1 victory in Round 5 over China was the crucial moment for our team, but according to the Ukrainian coach Mikhail Brodsky, the most difficult encounters were against Kazakhstan in Round 3 and especially against Turkey in Round 4! 'The match with Turkey lasted long and was quite nerve-racking,' Mikhail recalled. 'Anna Ushenina won convincingly, Natasha Zhukova drew, but after the first time-control two games were still going on: one looked like lost for us and in the other one the position was clearly worse for Ukraine… But we managed to draw both!'

Anna Ushenina's change from brunette to blonde did not go unnoticed in the Ukrainian press.

In Round 7, Ukraine defeated Georgia 3-1, and this helped a lot to move ahead and fight for victory, although the match versus the U.S. in the penultimate round was very difficult as well. 'Thanks to Kateryna Lahno and Natalia Zhukova, who put great pressure on their opponents, we won,' Brodsky smiled. At the outset of the last round Ukraine was two match points ahead of the Chinese team, and a draw against Russia secured first place.

Looking back, Brodsky didn't want to single out any of the players: 'We are a team, and all players had their contribution to the team result. We also won 4 individual medals: silver on Boards 1, 2, and 3 (Lahno, Ushenina, Muzychuk) and gold on Board 4 (Zhukova).' Although he preferred to look at the team as a whole, Brodsky stressed the importance of a decision Anna Ushenina took. 'As the current Women's World Champion Anna had every right to play on first board, but in the interest of the team she agreed to play on second board, leaving first board for Kateryna Lahno.'

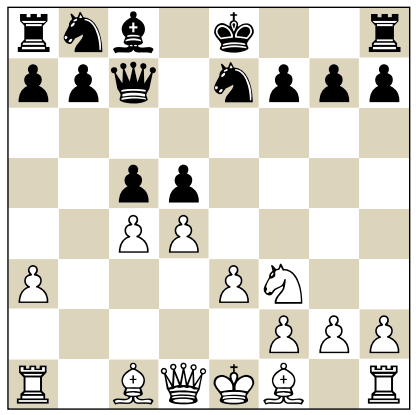
At the recent Chess Olympiad in Istanbul the same players with the same captain also did well and took bronze. The only time the Ukrainian women won an Olympiad was in Turin, in 2006. Now, for the first time, they had also won the World Team Championship.

While practically the entire team left from Kyiv for Astana, only the youngest, Mariya Muzychuk, returned to Kyiv after the championship. Together with Mikhail Brodsky she enjoyed all the attention from the media and government officials that awaited them starting right from the airport. Maria got all the flowers, made several television appearances and received the Ukrainian title of Merited Master of Sport. The other girls went either directly to their home cities or travelled elsewhere to further chess events. Anna Ushenina travelled to a tournament in China before she returned for our advanced chess game.

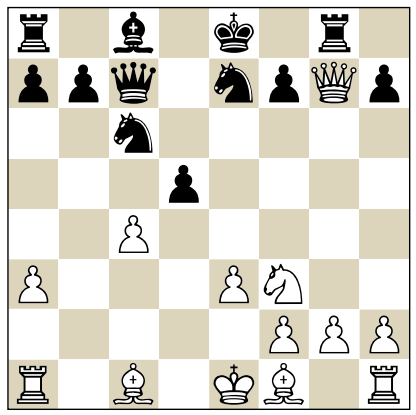
NOTES BY
Mikhail Brodsky

QO 16.11 – D31
Anna Ushenina
Bela Khotenashvili
Astana 2013 (7)

This win was to a significant extent decisive in our match against Georgia. **1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.a3!?** Black wants to transpose into the Ragozin Defence after 4.♘f3 ♘f6, but White has other plans.
4...♗xc3+ 5.bxc3 c5 6.e3 ♘e7 7.♘f3 ♕c7 8.cxd5 exd5 9.c4

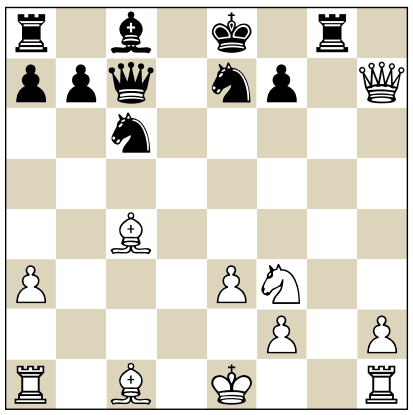


9...cxd4!?
Mitkov played against Beliavsky 9...0-0 10.cxd5 ♘xd5 11.♕c2 cxd4 12.♕xc7 ♘xc7 13.♘xd4 ♘e6, but after 14.♘f5! ♘c5 15.♘e7+ ♔h8 16.♘xc8 ♖xc8, he had an inferior endgame and in the end he lost. Black's idea is far more interesting, although objectively it is not altogether correct.
10.♕xd4 ♘bc6 11.♕xg7 ♖g8

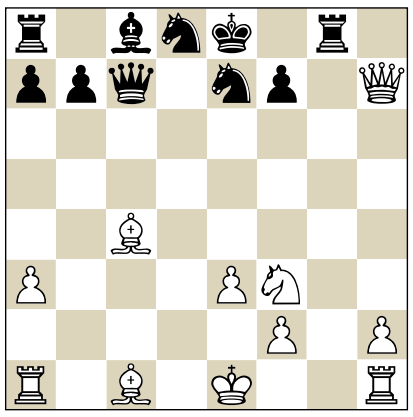


12.♕b2 The greedy computer initially suggests 12.♕xh7, but in the wild positions after 12...♗f5 Black has

good counterplay. But 12.♕c3!? was a worthy alternative.
12...dxc4 13.♗xc4 ♖xg2 14.♕h8+ ♖g8 15.♕xh7



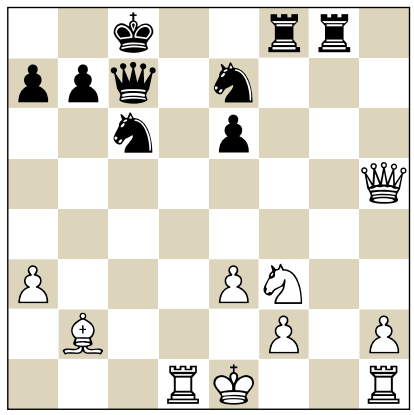
15...♗e6 The cunning 15...♘d8! was evidently stronger:



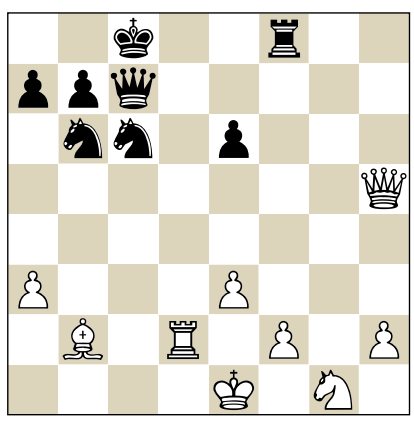
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 16.♘d2 ♗f5, e.g. 17.♕h5 ♗g6 18.♕f3 ♘dc6 19.♗b2 0-0-0, and it is almost impossible for White to hide her king: 20.♖d1 ♕a5!? 21.♗xf7 ♗xf7 22.♕xf7 ♘d5. The compensation for the two pawns is quite sufficient, and even it is simpler playing Black;

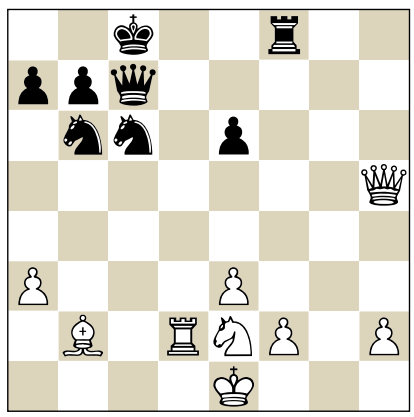
B) 16.♕d3! ♗f5!? 17.e4 ♗e6 18.♗xe6 ♘xe6 19.♗e3 ♕a5+ 20.♕d2 ♕a6 21.♖g1!, and after all Black does not have full compensation for the pawn.
16.♗xe6 fxe6 17.♕h5+ ♔d7 18.♗b2 ♖af8 19.♖d1+ ♔c8



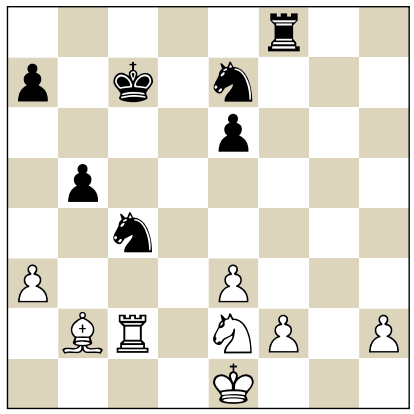
20.♖g1! It has become clear that White has successfully solved her problems and has the advantage.
20...♖xg1+ 21.♘xg1 ♘d5 22.♖d2! Another accurate move, restricting Black's counterplay.
22...♘b6



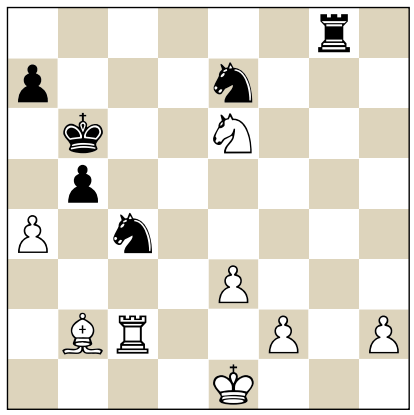
23.♘e2 Strictly speaking, 23.♘f3, not allowing ...e5, was stronger: 23...♘a4 24.♗a1 ♕e7 25.♕g4 ♘c5 26.♗e5! ♖xf3 27.♗d6 ♕f7 28.♗xc5, with advantage.



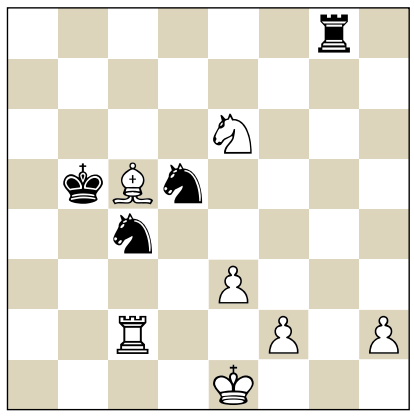
23...♘c4? The decisive mistake. Better was 23...e5 24.♖c2 ♔b8 25.♖c5! ♘d7 26.♖d5, when White still has the advantage, but anything could have happened. After all, White's king is not very secure.
24.♕c5! ♘e7 25.♕xc7+ ♔xc7 26.♖c2 b5



27.♘d4 ♔b6 28.♘xe6 ♖g8 29.a4



29...♘d5?! Now it all ends quickly. However, White would also have won after 29...♖g6!? 30.♗d4+ ♔a5 31.axb5! ♔xb5 32.♘c7+! ♔b4 33.♔e2 ♖c6 34.♘e8! ♘d5 35.♖c1! ♔b3 36.♘g7 ♖h6 37.♘f5 ♖xh2 38.♗g7!.
30.♗d4+ ♔a5 31.axb5 ♔xb5 32.♗xa7 ♔b4 33.♗c5+ ♔b5

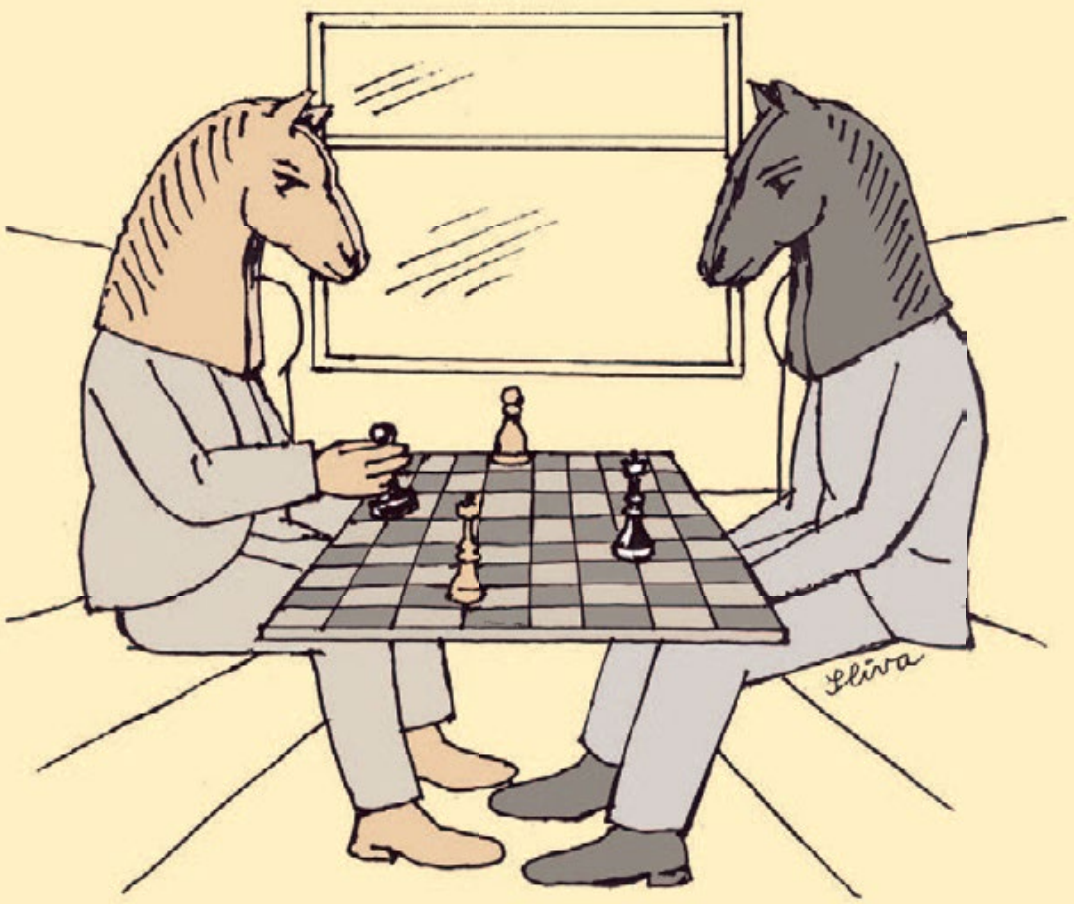


34.♗f8! Accuracy to the end.
34...♘db6 35.♘d4+ ♔a6 36.♗c5 Black resigned.

Astana 2013

		Mp	Bp
1	Ukraine	16	24½
2	China	15	25½
3	Russia	13	24
4	Georgia	12	21½
5	India	9	18
6	USA	8	15½
7	Kazakhstan	6	15½
8	Romania	6	14½
9	France	4	12
10	Turkey	1	9

Chess Train 2013



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NOTES BY
Mariya Muzychuk

GI 9.5 – D94
Nino Khurtsidze
Mariya Muzychuk
Astana 2013 (7)

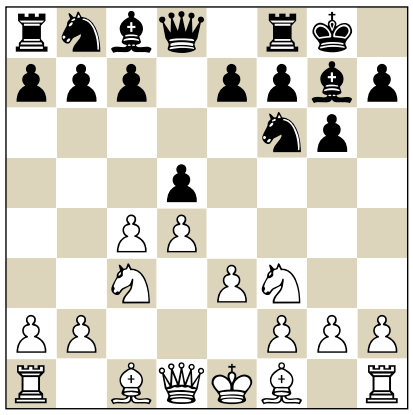
The Women's World Team Championship was my most memorable and most successful tournament to date. For the first time our Ukrainian team became the winner of this prestigious tournament. I am very glad that all team members contributed a lot to this great success.

This game was played in Round 7 against the team of Georgia. By that time we were leading, and this match was quite crucial. The Georgian women's team is very strong and our win increased our confidence.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5

Usually, Nino plays 3.♘f3 followed by the system with 4.g3, so basically my preparation was in this direction. After 3.♘c3 I decided to check my abilities in the Grünfeld Defence. I've never played it before, but I knew that my opponent does not have a big experience in this opening either.

4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.e3 0-0

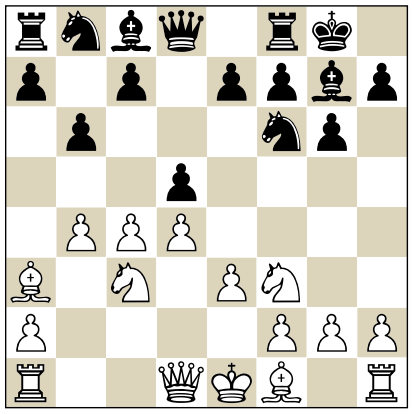


6.b4 One of the possible lines. White gains space on the queenside, and prevents Black from playing ...c5, which is quite common for this structure.

6.♗e2 is the main move in this position.

6...b6 7.♗a3 During the game I managed to remember some games after the most common move, 7.♕b3,

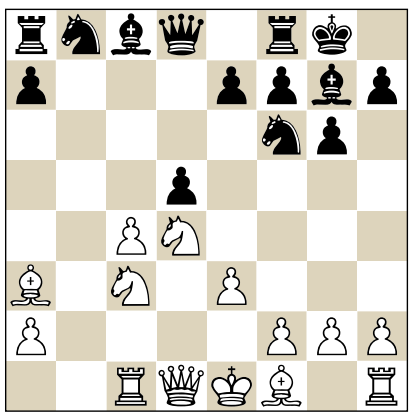
when 7...c5 8.bxc5 bxc5 9.cxd5 and now 9...♘bd7 or 9...♘a6 promises Black quite a comfortable position.



7...c5! This is the main move and the most principled one. It has been played by Peter Svidler, who is known to be one of the greatest experts in the Grünfeld. The only problem was that I did not know the position after 7.♗a3 and it took me about 30 minutes to find the right plan.

8.♖c1 Better was 8.bxc5 bxc5 9.♖c1 (taking the pawn, 9.♗xc5, is too dangerous for White, in view of her bad development. Black creates a forced attack on the hanging pieces and obtains excellent compensation after 9...♘a6 10.♗a3 ♕a5 11.♗b2 ♖b8 12.♕d2 ♕b4 13.♗c1 ♘e4 14.♘xe4 dxe4 15.♘g5 ♗f5).

The difference between including 8.bxc5 bxc5 followed by 9.♖c1 and 8.♖c1 immediately, as was played in the game, can be seen in the following line: 9...cxd4 10.♘xd4

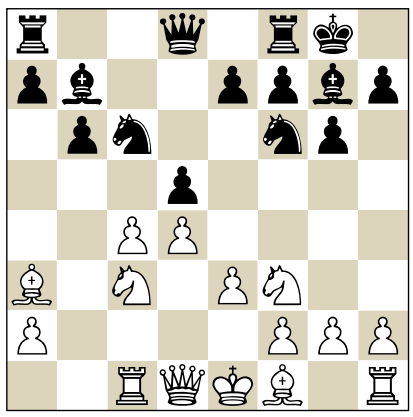


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and now Black cannot play 10...e5 as the rook is hanging, and 10...♗b7 is not that good either in the view of 11.♕b3. That's why the best option is 9...♘e4, as was seen in the game Kortchnoi-Svidler, European Club Cup 2006.

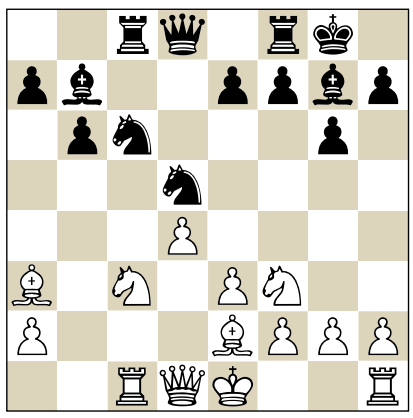
8...cxb4 Better was 8...cxd4! 9.♘xd4 ♗b7 and White has problems to develop the f1-bishop.

9.♗xb4 ♘c6 10.♗a3 ♗b7



11.cxd5 ♘xd5 12.♗e2 ♖c8

We can see that Black's position is already comfortable. I have almost finished my development and have easy play.



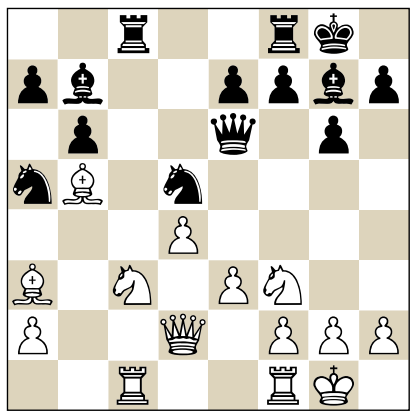
13.♕d2 White has to make the additional move 13.♕d2, as immediately castling kingside loses to a tactical trick: 13.0-0? ♘xc3 14.♖xc3 ♘xd4 15.♖xc8 ♘xe2+ 16.♕xe2 ♕xc8 and Black is simply a pawn up. 17.♗xe7 does not work, as after 17...♖e8 followed by ...♗a6, Black wins an exchange.

13...♘a5 14.0-0 ♕d7?!

During the game I first checked the line 14...♘c4 15.♗xc4 ♖xc4 16.♘xd5 ♗xd5 17.♖xc4 ♗xc4 18.♖c1 ♗d5 19.♕c2, which is probably still good for Black, but I didn't want to give up the c-file.

But easiest and best was 14...♘xc3 15.♖xc3 ♖xc3 16.♕xc3 ♕d7. The next move will be ...♖c8 and there aren't any problems for Black.

15.♗b5 ♕e6



16.♘g5?! An interesting move. White is trying to exploit the uncom-

As their teammates all went in different directions, Mariya Muzychuk and coach Mikhail Brodsky were the only two members of the victorious team that returned to Kyiv Airport.

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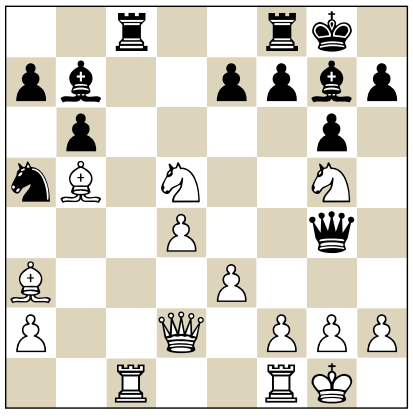
fortable position of the queen, but objectively speaking this forced line appears to be in Black's favour. Therefore she had to choose 16.♘xd5 ♗xd5 17.♗a6, when Black still has to make some moves to coordinate her pieces.

16...♕g4 17.♘xd5



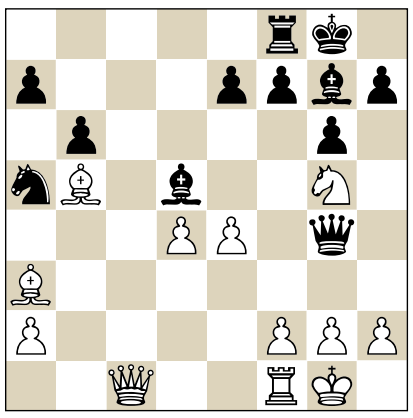
17...♖xc1? I decided to include 17...♖xc1 18.♖xc1, with the idea to have 21...♗xf3 in the variation 18...♗xd5 19.e4 ♗h6 20.♗xe7 ♗xe4 21.f3 ♗xf3, but I had missed 22.h3! and now White wins a piece.

The simple 17...♗xd5 18.e4 ♘c4 19.♗xc4 ♗xc4 20.♖fe1 ♖fe8 21.♘f3 ♕d7 would have given Black a comfortable position.

18.♕xc1?

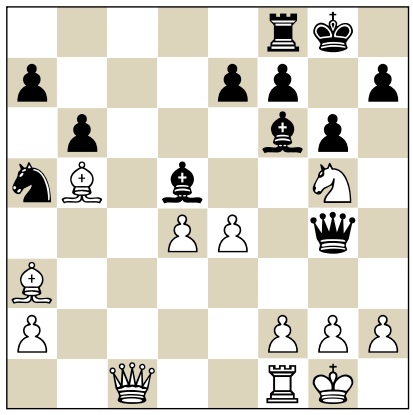
A mistake in reply. As was mentioned, correct was 18.♖xc1! ♗xd5 19.e4 ♗f6. This other possibility, instead of 19...♗h6, is not good either: 20.f4 ♗xg5 21.fxg5 ♕xe4 22.♖e1 followed by 23.♗xe7, and White is better, as her dark-coloured bishop does not have an opponent.

18...♗xd5 19.e4



19...♗f6? At this moment I already liked my position and overestimated my chances after 19...♗f6 20.♘xh7.

Instead, 19...♖c8! leads to an evident advantage after 20.♕e3 ♘c4 21.♗xc4 ♗xc4.

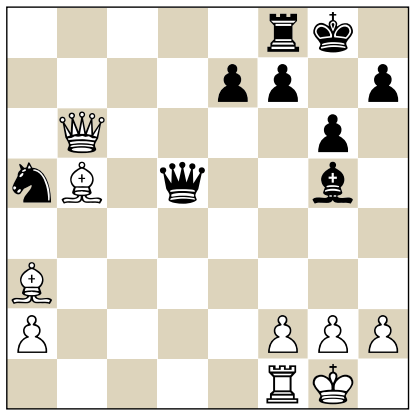


20.exd5?!

It was not easy to calculate all these lines correctly over the board, and fortunately Nino did not find the best moves.

20.♘xh7! would have given White the advantage: 20...♔xh7 21.exd5 ♖d8 22.d6 exd6 23.♕c7.

20...♗xg5 21.♕c7 ♕xd4 22.♕xa7 ♕xd5 23.♕xb6



Finally the position has become more clear. If the a-pawn doesn't move too far, Black will equalize.

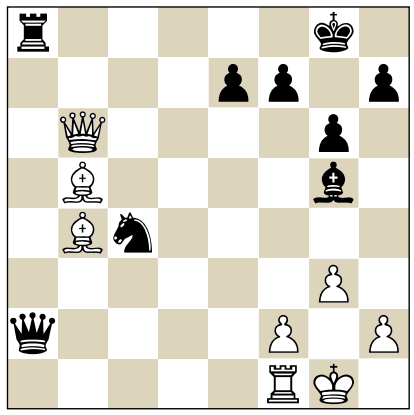
23...♖a8

23...♘c4 is not good, because of 24.♕c5 ♕xc5 25.♗xc5 ♖c8 26.♗b4, and here the a2-pawn looks quite dangerous.

24.g3

White has to sacrifice the pawn and try to exploit the fact that all my pieces are scattered over the board. As the next black move will be ...♕xa2, threatening ...♕xa3, I'd suggest to put the bishop on b4 right away.

24...♕xa2 25.♗b4 ♘c4



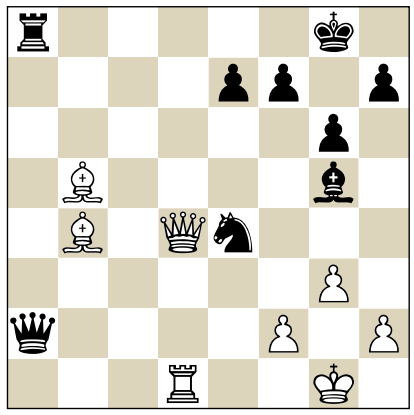
Black is a pawn up, but the pair of bishops gives White good compensation.

26.♕c5 For example, here White had a good opportunity to use the uncomfortable position of the black pieces to win back the pawn: 26.♕c6 ♘e5 27.♕e4 ♗f6 28.♗xe7 ♗xe7 29.♕xe5 ♗f8, with equality.

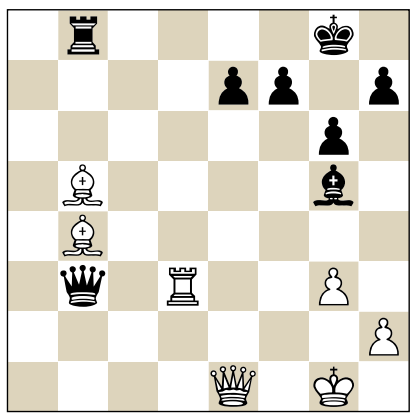
26...♘d2 27.♖d1 ♘e4

The computer suggests 27...♕b3. Probably this is the best option, but it looks dangerous and requires many moves that would be difficult to find.

28.♕d4



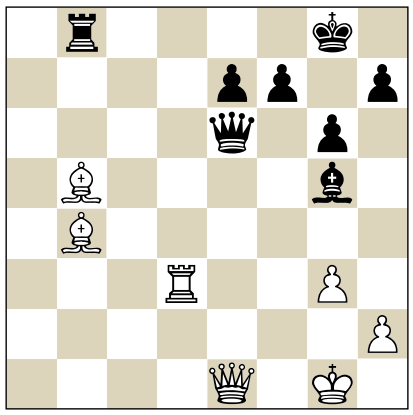
28...♘xf2! The best move from a practical point of view. **29.♕xf2 ♕b3 30.♕e1 ♖b8 31.♖d3!**



The only defence, but not so obvious.

31...♕e6!

31...♕b2 was much worse, as it offers White many possibilities to equalize, such as 32.♖d5 ♗f6 33.♗xe7 ♕b3 34.♗xf6 ♕xd5 35.♗f1.



32.♗d7?

A big mistake. White just missed the check from b6.

32.♗a4! was best, when there is nothing better than a draw for Black.

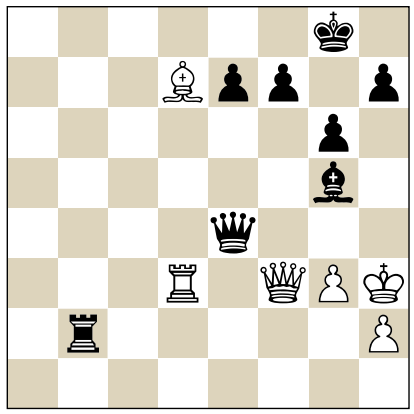
32...♕b6+ 33.♔g2 ♕xb4

Now, with two pawns up, my position became winning.

34.♕d1

34.♕xb4 was better, as White's king is in danger, but of course there are more chances to miss something when there are more pieces on the board.

34...♕e4+ 35.♕f3 ♖b2+ 36.♔h3



36...♕xf3

36...♕c4 was much stronger: 37.♖c3 ♕a2 38.♖c8+ ♔g7, and this is easily winning. But I chose a safer continuation and went for an endgame. This was quite reasonable as by this moment my team was already leading 2-1.

37.♖xf3 ♔g7

The rest is quite easy.

38.♔g4 ♗f6 39.h4 h5+ 40.♔f4 ♖e2 41.♖d3 ♖e1 42.♔f3 ♗e5 43.♗c6 f5 44.♗e8 ♗d6 45.♔f2 ♖b1 46.♔f3 ♖b8 47.♗d7 ♖b6 48.♖c3 ♖b2 49.♗e8 ♗e5! 50.♖d3 ♗c7 51.♖a3 ♗b6 52.♔f4 ♔f6

White resigned.

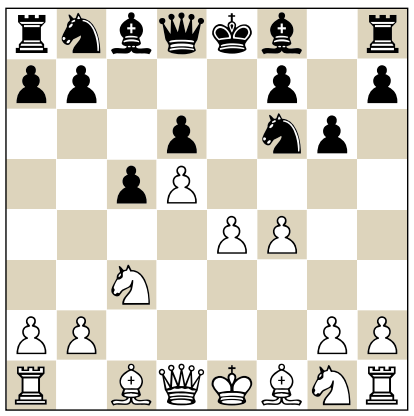
Mariya Muzychuk, fully concentrated at the start of her game against Nino Khurtsidze.

NOTES BY
Natalia Zhukova

BI 7.5 – A67
Viktorija Ni
Natalia Zhukova
Astana 2013 (8)

This game was played in the decisive Round 8 match with the USA team. The Americans were very strong and unpredictable opponents (in Round 7 they defeated Russia). Therefore, despite the black pieces, I had to endeavour not only to equalize, but also to obtain a position with opportunities for play. My choice fell on a sharp opening – the Modern Benoni.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.f4



The most critical line.

7...♗g7 8.♗b5+ ♘fd7 9.♗d3

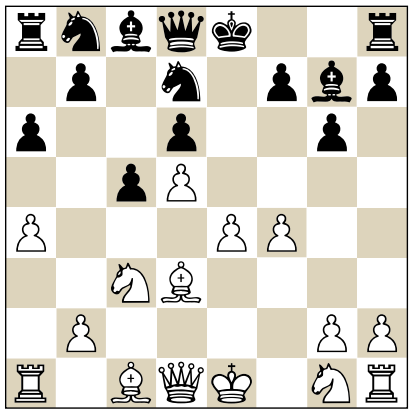
This move slightly surprised me and I spent about 30 minutes in thought. If I had been more attentive in my preparations, I would have discovered that just a month earlier this was played by Viktorija's husband – Yuri Shulman. The main line is 9.a4 0-0 (9...♕h4+ is possible, but in this version it should not frighten White after 10.g3) 10.♘f3 ♘a6 11.0-0 ♘b4.

9...a6

The afore-mentioned game went 9...0-0 10.♘f3 ♘f6 11.0-0 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♕xf3 ♘bd7 14.♗e3 a6 15.a4 ♕a5 16.♔h1 ♖fe8 17.♖fe1 ♕b4 18.♕f2 c4 19.♗b1 ♖ac8 20.a5 ♘c5 21.♗xc5 ♕xc5 22.♕f3 h5? (22...♘h5

is better, with good play) 23.e5 h4 24.♗xg6 fxg6 25.exf6 ♗xf6 26.♕g4 ♖xe1+ 27.♖xe1 ♔g7 28.f5 g5 29.♕h5 ♔f8 30.♖e6 ♕d4 31.♘e4 ♗e5 32.♘xg5 1-0, Shulman-Mikkelsen, Reykjavik 2013.

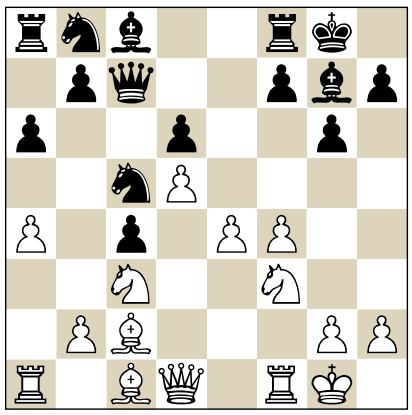
10.a4



10...♕c7

Standard play with 10...0-0 11.♘f3 ♘f6 leads to a position from the Four Pawns Attack in the King's Indian with one tempo less, which should not be good for Black.

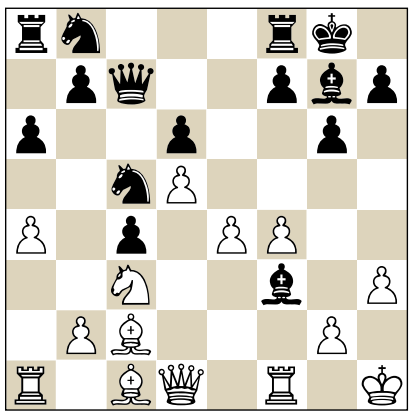
11.♘f3 c4 12.♗c2 0-0 13.0-0 ♘c5



14.♔h1?!

14.h3, restricting the bishop, came into consideration.

14...♗g4 15.h3 ♗xf3

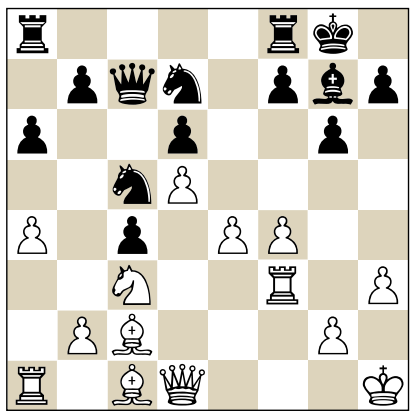


Natalia Zhukova, gold medalist on Board 4, has a friendly chat with one of the arbiters.

16.♖xf3!?

Viktorija decides to keep her queen on d1 to support the ♗c1-e3-d4 manoeuvre. After 16.♕xf3 ♘bd7 17.♗e3 ♖ab8 18.a5 b5 19.axb6 ♖xb6 no clear plan for White is apparent, and Black's position is already slightly more pleasant.

16...♘bd7



17.♗e3

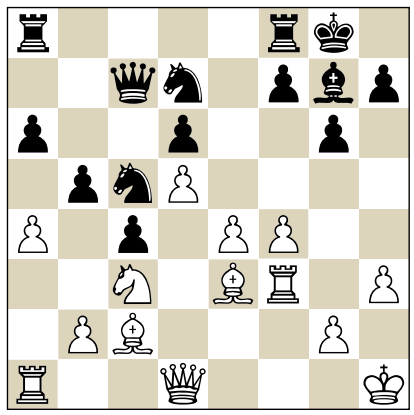
17.♕f1 was preferable, when Black would have faced the difficult problem of how to defend or sacrifice the pawn.

Thus, for example, if 17...♘b3 18.♗xb3 cxb3 there follows 19.f5! ♘e5 20.f6! ♗h8 21.♖f2, and although in the final position Black has counterplay on the queenside, it is not very comfortable playing with the bishop shut in on h8.

The typical 17...♗xc3 18.♖xc3 b5 could have been met by 19.♗e3 ♘b6 20.♗d4 ♘bxa4 21.♖g3 f6 22.♕f3, with a dangerous attack.

17...b5

Perhaps this move was underestimated by my opponent. After accurately calculating the variations, it is not difficult to conclude that Black does not require a preparatory move such as ♖b8.



18.♗d4

Although the capture of the pawn did not lead to an advantage for White, she should have been thinking of equalizing and nevertheless played 18.axb5 axb5 19.♘xb5 ♕b6 20.♖xa8 ♖xa8 21.♘a3 ♕b4 22.♗d4 c3 23.♗xg7 ♔xg7 24.♕e1 ♕xb2 25.♕xc3+ ♕xc3 26.♖xc3 ♘f6 27.♘b5 ♘fxe4 28.♗xe4 ♘xe4 29.♖c6 with equality.

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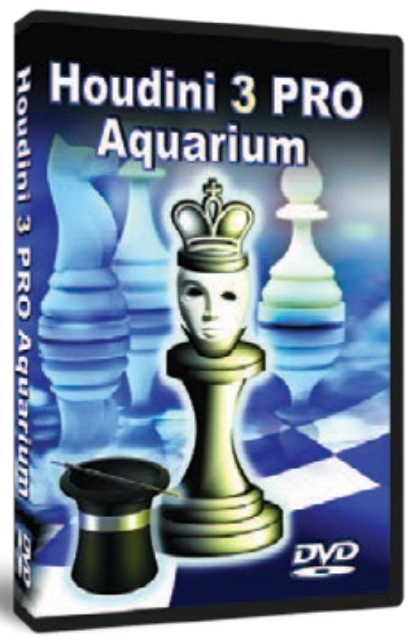

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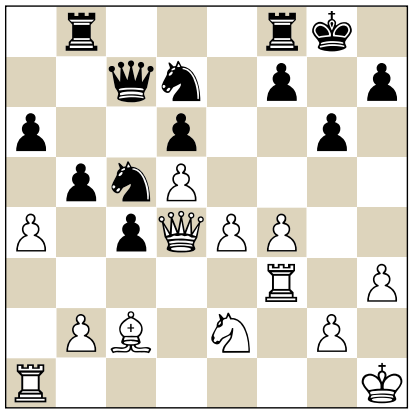
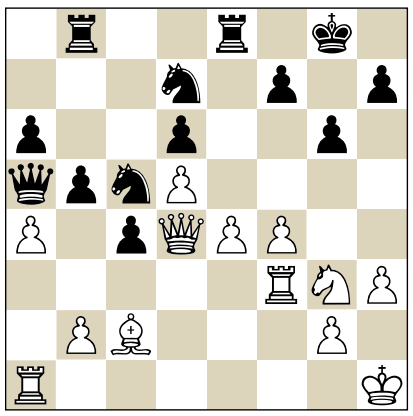
18...♗xd4 19.♕xd4 ♖ab8
Black has a comfortable game, with a clear plan – I assessed this position to be in my favour.
20.♘e2



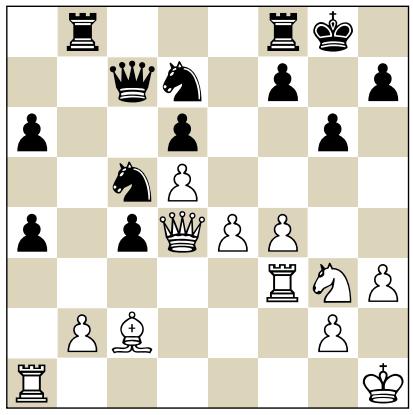
20...bxa4
Time-trouble was approaching and I wanted to clarify the structure. But the simple strengthening of the position was objectively stronger: 20...♖fe8 21.♘g3 ♕a5 and White lacks attacking resources:



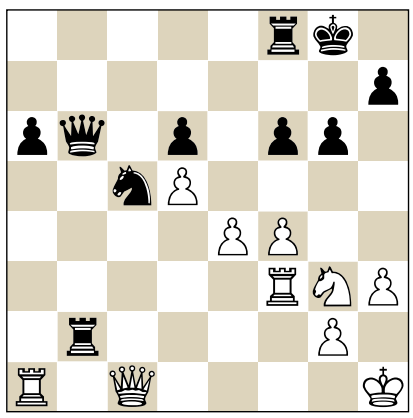
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 22.f5 ♘e5 23.♖ff1 bxa4 24.♕e3 ♕d8 25.f6 ♔h8! 26.♗xa4 ♖g8. Here, of course, Black is safe and even has a big advantage, but there is no guarantee that I would have made all these accurate defensive moves;

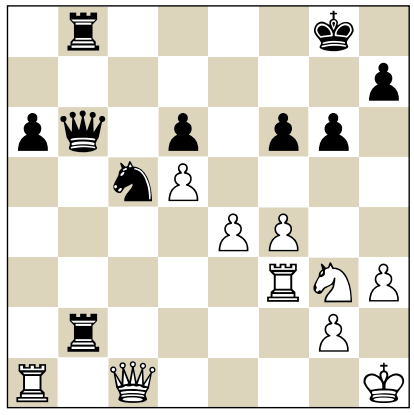
B) 22.♘h5 does not work (although this was what I was afraid of during the game, and therefore I played 20...bxa4) in view of 22...gxh5 23.♖g3+ ♔f8 24.e5 dxe5 25.fxe5 ♖xe5 26.♗xh7 ♖b6.
21.♘g3
21.♗xa4 was better, after which I was planning 21...♖b4 22.♗xd7 ♕xd7, but after 23.f5 the position is roughly equal.



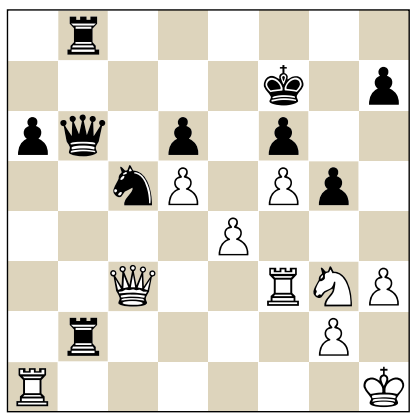
21...f6
21...♘b3 22.♗xb3 ♖xb3 was tempting, but after 23.♖xa4 ♕c5 24.♖xc4 ♕xd4 25.♖xd4 ♖xb2 I decided that the position was roughly equal.
Initially I wanted to play 21...♕b6 22.♘f5 f6 23.♘e7+ ♔g7 24.♘c6, but on general grounds I did not want to allow the passive knight to come into play.
22.♕xc4?!
But here 22.♗xa4 was simply essential, and if 22...♖b4 then 23.♖fa3, with equality.
22...♖xb2 23.♗xa4 ♘b6
23...♕a5 would have lost the advantage after 24.♕c1.
24.♕c1 ♘bxa4 25.♖xa4 ♕b6 26.♖a1



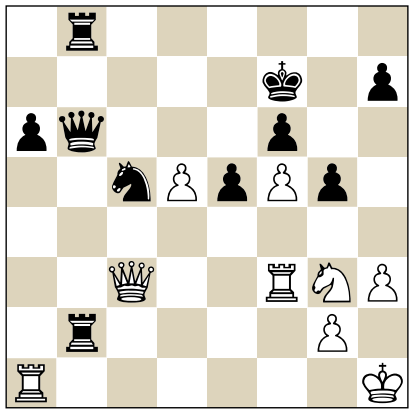
26...♖b8
This allows the e5 breakthrough, which was not played in the game, although other moves were no better.
But what is surprising is that after 26...a5 there is the strong 27.f5 g5 28.♘h5 h6 29.♕c3 ♘xe4 30.♕e3 ♕xe3 31.♖xe3 ♖b4 32.♖ae1 ♘c5 33.♖e7 ♖b7 34.♖xb7 ♘xb7 35.♖e7 ♘c5 36.♖g7+ ♔h8 37.♖a7 a4 38.♔g1 with equality.
Also after 26...♕b4 the correct continuation is 27.f5 g5 28.e5 dxe5 29.♖c3 ♖b3 30.♖xc5 ♖xg3 31.♔h2, again with equality.
But in the game Viktorija 'guessed wrong'.



27.f5?!
Correct was 27.e5! ♖b1 (27...fxe5 28.fxe5 dxe5 29.♕h6 is dangerous) 28.♖xb1 ♕xb1 29.♖f1! (I overlooked this move) 29...♕xc1 30.♖xc1 fxe5 31.fxe5 ♘d3 32.♖c6 and it's equal.
27...g5
Returning the favour. White would have had a difficult endgame after 27...♖b1 28.♖xb1 ♕xb1 29.♕xb1 ♖xb1+ 30.♔h2 g5.
28.♕c3 ♔f7

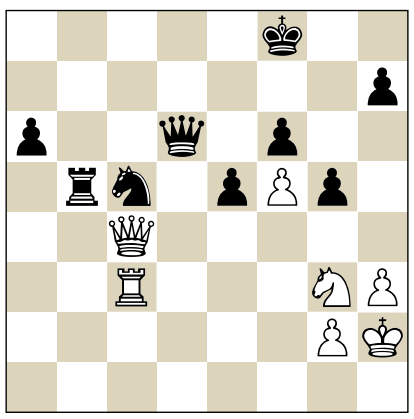


29.e5!
In time-trouble Viktorija effectively complicates matters!
29...dxe5
In view of the fact that we were playing on the 30 second increment, many decisions had to be taken intuitively. I did not like 29...fxe5 because of 30.f6.



30.d6?! Viktorija gives up too much material. After 30.♖c1 ♖b5 31.♕c4 ♕d6 32.♖fc3 ♖d8 33.♕g4 White stands not worse.

30...♕xd6 31.♕c4+ ♔f8 32.♖c3 ♖b1+ 33.♖xb1 ♖xb1+ 34.♔h2 ♖b5

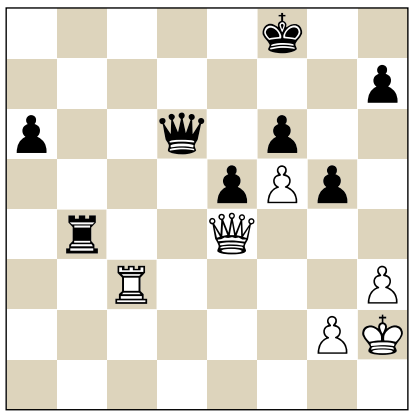


35.♘e4 What else? White needs invasion squares.

35...♘xe4 36.♕xe4

There is no mate after 36.♕c8+ ♔g7 37.♖c7+ ♔h6.

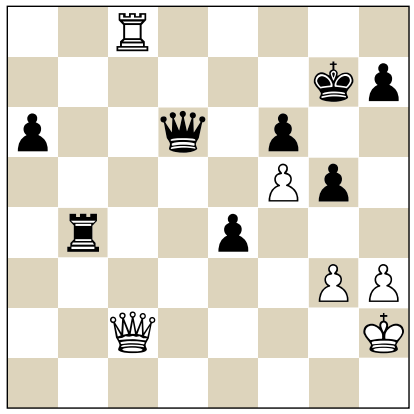
36...♖b4?! 36...♔g7 would not have spoiled anything.



37.♖c8+? After 37.♖c6! Black's two extra pawns might not have been sufficient for a win: 37...♖xe4 38.♖xd6 ♔e7 39.♖xa6 h5 40.♖a7+ ♔f8 41.♖a8+ ♔g7 42.♖a7+ ♔h6 43.♖f7 g4 44.hxg4 hxg4 45.♖xf6+ ♔g5 46.♖f8 ♔f4 47.♖g8 ♔xf5.

37...♔g7 Strangely enough, after 37...♔e7!? the king would have felt completely safe in the centre.

38.♕c2 e4+ 39.g3



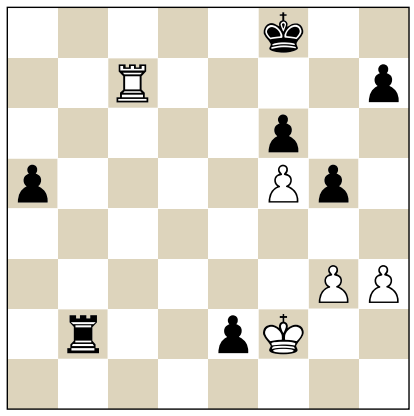
39...e3

The most convincing was 39...♔h6!.

40.♕c7+ ♕xc7 41.♖xc7+ ♔f8

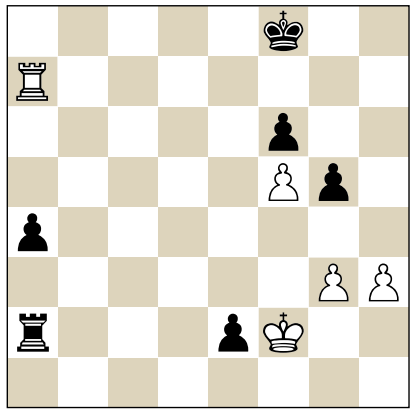
Black also wins by 41...♔h6 42.♖e7 ♖b2+ 43.♔g1 ♖b5 44.♖xe3 ♖xf5 45.♖a3 a5.

42.♔g2 ♖b2+ 43.♔f3 e2 44.♔f2 a5



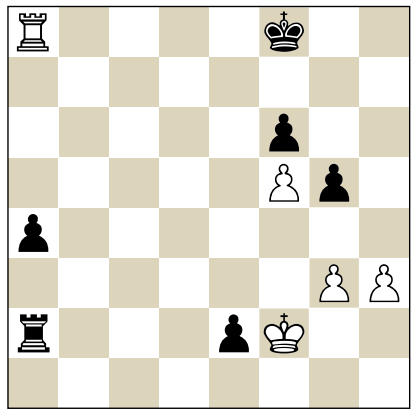
Black's position is won.

45.♖xh7 a4 46.♖a7 ♖a2



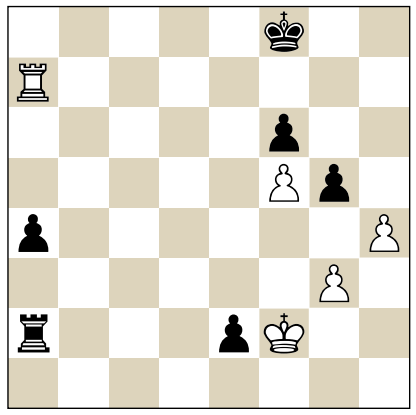
47.h4

The best chance was the verifying check 47.♖a8+, although Black has hardly any chance of going wrong, since both king manoeuvres win:



A) 47...♔e7 48.♖a7+ (forced, since after the immediate 48.h4 gxh4 49.gxh4 Black changes plan and returns to stop the h-pawn with the king: 49...♔f7!) 48...♔d6 49.h4 gxh4 50.gxh4 a3 51.h5 ♖a1 52.♔xe2 a2 53.h6 ♖h1 54.h7 ♖xh7! 55.♖a6+ ♔c5 56.♔d3 ♖h3+ 57.♔e4 ♖h2 winning;

B) 47...♔g7 48.♖a7+ ♔h6 49.♖a6 a3 50.♖xf6+ ♔g7 51.♖a6 ♖a1 52.♔xe2 a2 53.♔f3 ♖f1+ 54.♔g4 a1♕ 55.♖xa1 ♖xa1 56.♔xg5 ♖a3 with an easy win.



47...gxh4

Of course, not 47...a3?? because of 48.hxg5 fxg5 49.g4 ♖a1 50.♔xe2 a2 51.♖a8+! ♔f7 52.♖a7+ ♔f6 53.♖a6+ ♔e5 54.f6! ♖h1 55.f7 with a draw.

48.gxh4 a3 49.h5 ♔g8 50.h6 ♖a1 51.♔xe2 a2 White resigned.

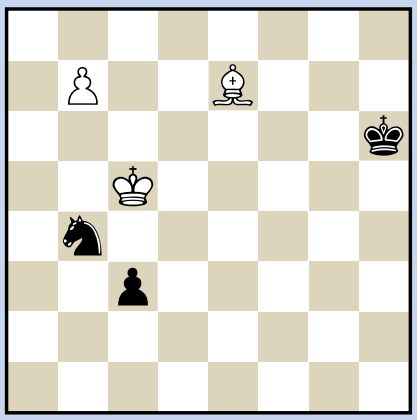
Finally we have managed to break the Chinese series of victories in the world championship. Thanks to all the girls in our team, and of course our trainer, for their efforts! ■

Yochanan Afek

Beware: Brilliancy!

Oversights are part of the practice of each and everyone of us. A great majority of them bear no special interest beyond the obvious lesson to avoid repeating them. In all six diagrams below forced mating lines were overlooked mostly by grandmasters. Could you possibly do better?

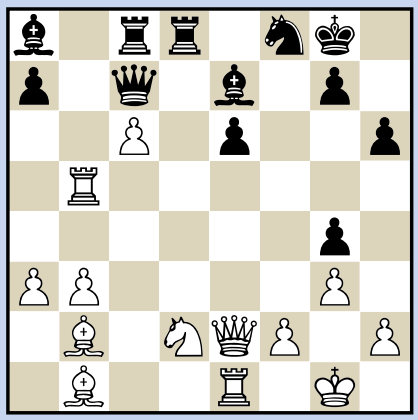
★☆☆☆☆



1. White to move and win

White found no better than **66.♔xb4** and had to settle for just a draw following **66...c2 67.b8♕ c1♕ 68.♕h8+ ♔g6 69.♕f6+ ♔h7 70.♕f5+ ♔g7 71.♗f6+ ♔h6 72.♗g5+.** Was it the best he could do?

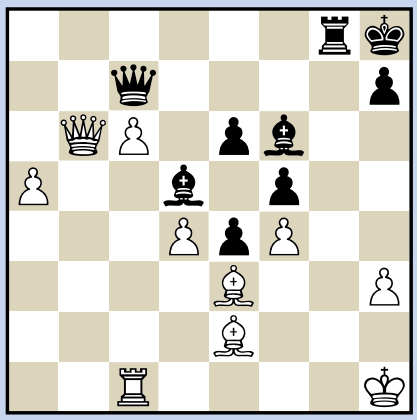
★★☆☆☆



2. Black to move and win

A remarkable oversight. In this position Black played **28...♗xc6??,** missing a rather simple yet nice win.

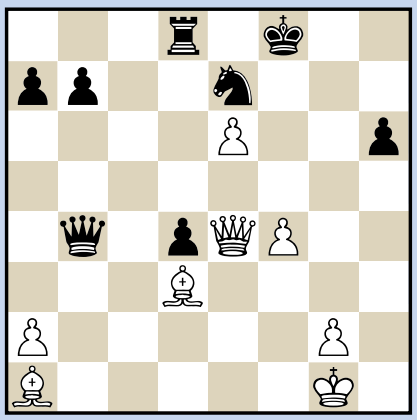
★★★☆☆



3. Black to move and win

Black went for the courageous **33...♕xf4!?** **34.♗xf4 e3+.** However the counterblow **35.♗f3!** left him with just perpetual check after **35...♗xf3+ 36.♔h2 ♖g2+ 37.♔h1 ♖g3+** etc. Was there more than that in the position?

★★★☆☆



4. White to move and win

Here White chose the anaemic **34.a3** and a draw was agreed. Could she play more aggressively against the exposed enemy king?

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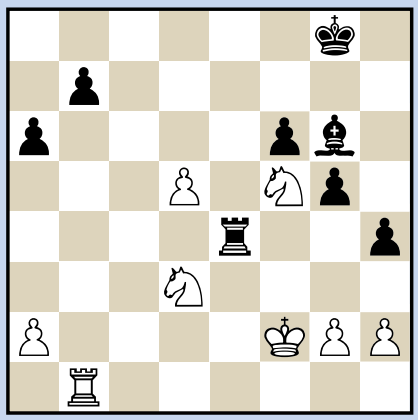
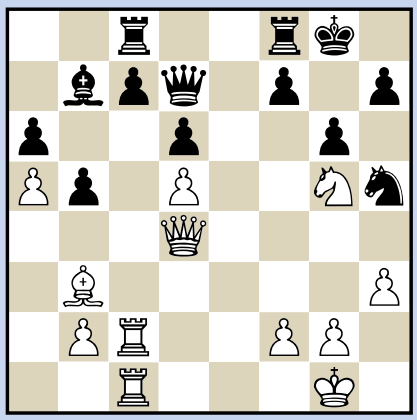


5. White to move and win

In time-trouble White went for **40. ♖xb7?!** and ended up in a drawish ending. In his home analysis he managed to discover an amazing route to victory. And you?

★★★★☆

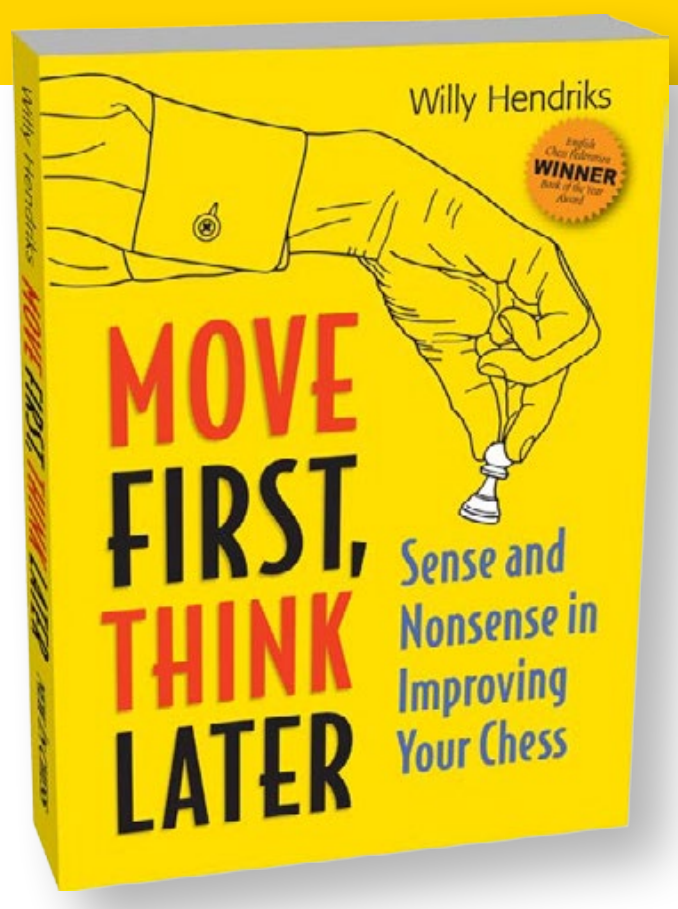


6. White to move and win

White chose the retreat **26.♘f3** and after **26...♗a8 27.♕a7 ♘f4! 28.♕d4 ♕f5** got into an inferior position and even lost on time. In fact with the lost point he also missed an evergreen combination for future anthologies. Any suggestions?

The number of stars roughly indicates their estimated level of difficulty: 1 is easiest and 5 most difficult. **Solutions on page 99**

Move or Method



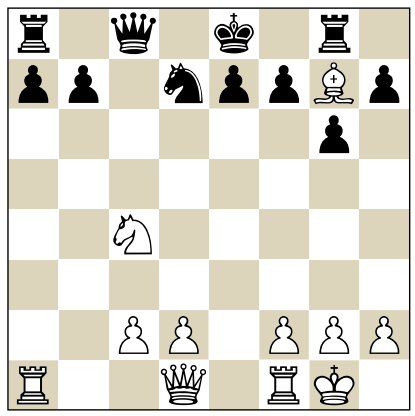
Willy Hendriks

One of the interesting aspects of playing chess and trying to improve your chess is that it makes us think about our thinking, about the workings of our own mind. You might say it gives us some sort of 'inside view' into the workings of our brain, but that may well be far too optimistic a description. One of the recurring themes throughout the history of psychology is exactly this difficulty of getting reliable knowledge by 'looking' into one's own mind.

Perhaps the word confrontation is more suitable. Especially after a less than optimal performance we often wonder where on earth our moves came from.

To illustrate this point, I started my book with my worst move ever, but the same question applies to our good moves as well. After the game we might pretend that everything was planned and the product of exemplary logical thinking, but the fact that good moves suddenly do pop up in our minds is as big a problem as why sometimes they don't (although the latter question obviously troubles us more).

Let's have a look at a relatively simple position (White to move). By the way, all the diagrams in this article can be approached as a puzzle, and it's worth the effort trying to solve them, or at least to decide on the move you would play, before reading on. Once you know the best move in a given position, there is no return to the fresh and innocent point of view of the unaware. I'll return to this meaningful fact later on.

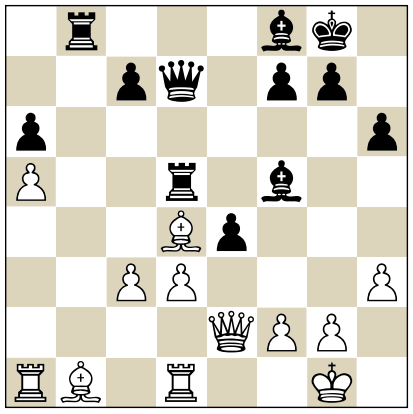


In this ICC game Black has temporarily given up a piece, expecting to win it back and maybe even to hold on to his extra pawn. But White has the elegant **1.♕e2** available, ending the game at once.

Once you have seen this move, it looks evident and it is hard to believe anyone could miss it.

Let's move on to a slightly more difficult position. There is a chance that you've seen this position some pages ago, since it's from a game from the Candidates' Tournament that just finished in London. Black to move.

With his debut *Move First, Think Later; Sense and Nonsense in Improving Your Chess*, Willy Hendriks caused quite a stir. In the *Washington Times*, David Sands described it as 'a polemical, often infuriating, but never dull attempt to apply the latest thinking in cognitive science and epistemology to the enduring mystery of how a chess player figures out how to play the best move in a given position.' For his inspiring and thought-provoking effort, but also for the book's great entertainment value, Hendriks was awarded the 2012 English Chess Federation Book of the Year award. Looking back at the different reactions, the author wonders how easily we deceive ourselves when we think what happens when we are considering our next move.



Svidler-Carlsen
London FIDE Candidates 2013 (6)

Carlsen played **25...exd3**, which seems to be directly winning because of the possible pin on the d-file.
But after **26.♗xd3 ♗xd3 27.♖xd3 c5** White managed to stay alive with **28.♗e5!**.

The game continued with **28...♖xd3 29.♗xb8 c4**, and Black later managed to convert his advantage.

Carlsen had surely foreseen 28.♗e5, but apparently he was satisfied with the resulting advantage.

In the press conference however, the move 25...♗xh3 was suggested, a move that clearly neither player had considered at all. It seems to be winning, although not at once; but for a player to start calculating it has to pop up to begin with. Now you can't qualify 25...♗xh3 as a crazy computer move. It's a very standard sacrifice and for the likes of Carlsen and Svidler you may expect it to be rather trivial (the idea, that is, not the resulting variations).

When we are thinking about our next move, some moves appear in our mind's eye and some don't. 'How could I play (or miss) that move' is the most-heard chess players' complaint, but it's not an easily answered question. We would like to call the chess playing guy inside to account for this, but well, there is this great difficulty to contact him.

In serious psychology, the 'guy inside' is not considered a useful concept, but it does nicely point to the fact that we are largely dependent on some sort of move-generator that clearly is not part of our conscious thinking process.

Browsing on the web, looking at chess players' reflections (and lamentations) on the different blogs and forums, you can see that this confrontation with our own mind fascinates a lot of chess players, especially those who, after having put some effort into getting better, come to the point where further progress is not a matter of course. In other fields of life, these are the ideal customers of the self-help coaching and advising industry.

The positive response to *Move First Think Later* can be partly explained by the interest in these questions on the working of our mind, but also by the effort to avoid easy explanations and easy remedies. 'As someone who has struggled with quite a lot of instructional literature over the years this book is a great tonic,' Marc Crowther noted.

Reversing the respectable order

If your book has an attractive title, offering the chance of different interpretations, you, as the author, are well advised not to get into explaining it yourself. But it has led to some misunderstandings and I especially would like to contradict the reproach that I am criticizing a lot of methods only to replace them by a new method, an approach that is somehow implied by the book's title.

It does express the intention to turn a few things upside down in the field of chess didactics, though, and to undermine some of the predominating concepts. This intention has been noticed, going by qualifications like: 'heretical', 'outrageous', 'an agent

provocateur', 'the contrarian' and 'an anarchist in chess writing'.

With these intentions in mind, reversing our first and most obvious certainty about the way we (should) play chess, makes a very tempting title. But it also touches upon a central idea in the book and is in defence of a 'literal interpretation' of the title: there is a sense in which the moves come before (some sort of) thinking.

The starting point of *Move First Think Later* is a criticism of the central dogma of chess didactics: the idea that you should begin with studying the characteristics, then make a general plan and only then start searching for a 'realization' at move level.

The logic that should guide this process consists of rules, principles, proverbs and concepts that can be adequately described in language. So starting with a careful examination of the characteristics, you should be able to 'reason' yourself towards the good moves in any position.

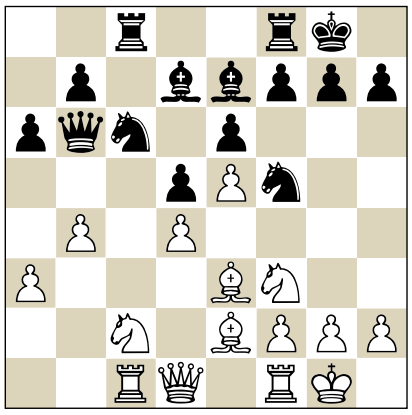
In this model, a trial-and-error approach is evidently a big sin. The moves should be distilled out of the characteristics of the position, as a result of the thinking process, and not serve as the starting point.

But in my opinion, this is not how it works. What I see is that chess players of all playing strengths very quickly start looking at moves to see if they work. These moves are not random but a reflection of the knowledge we bring with us to the board. This knowledge is, for the bigger part, action: moves, typical plans, tactics, manoeuvres.

So the respectable order of chess didactics can easily be reversed: effective moves steer us towards the essence of the position. It looks a bit like a chicken-or-egg dilemma and to my mind there actually is no order at all.

It's difficult to decide empirically on the issue, since it partly depends on our ability to judge what is going on in our minds when we play chess. And we do not seem to be very well equipped for this task.

How to continue as Black in the following position?



The connoisseur recognizes the French Advance Variation and quickly notices that Black is doing fine. So it's not surprising he has more than one good move, but the best option is **1...♘a7!**, preparing ...♗a4 or ...♗b5, bringing the rook on the c-file into play and maybe following up with ...♘b5.

In a few lectures on my book I presented this position and it turned out that everyone who found this idea had seen it before. Some others decided on 1... f6, which is also a decent move.

Although 1...♘a7 is a model strategic move, it appears to be quite difficult to spot if you haven't seen the idea before. So even in a position in which, in the eyes of the chess teacher, the characteristics seem to beg for the solution, players who are not familiar with the concrete idea seem to have a hard time 'deducting' it.

What we see is what we know. If you haven't got the moves available, you can't deduct them from the characteristics of the position. This doesn't mean that you need to have seen the exact position before. But the way in which our knowledge enables us to discover good moves in relatively new positions, is better described as 'recognizing similarities' than as a form of logical (lingual) reasoning.

In defence of method

These points – the rehabilitation of trial and error, reversing (or mixing up) the order, the idea that chess is a concrete game and that textbook generalities are of very limited use – received a lot of approval. But, of course, some reacted in defence of the traditional concepts.

In his blog *The Chess Mind*, Dennis Monokroussos brings forward a very sensible argument.

'While Hendriks makes some reasonable criticisms, I don't really agree with his anti-methodism. When we "see" what to do it doesn't at all mean that we've left the rules behind; rather, some principles are so integrated into our thinking patterns that when a position resembles our mental stereotypes closely enough we'll almost instantly understand what to do. Further, on those occasions when we don't know what to do, when our tacit knowledge doesn't immediately or quickly come to the rescue, then reflecting on questions of method – like The Three Questions – can help us.'

The first argument seems based on the assumption that we have learned chess through applying general principles to concrete positions. This once conscious process gets automated and now we can come up quickly with the good moves, building upon the integrated principles.

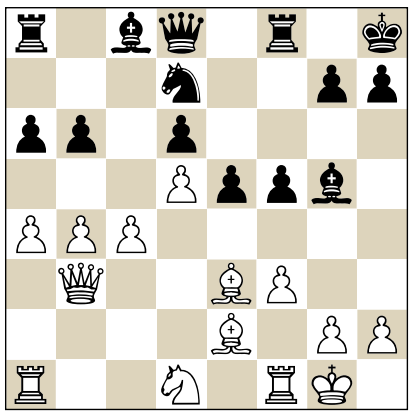
But I don't think that's the way we learn chess. We start learning chess by taking in concrete chess from the very first moment. One of the first things a lot of players learn is that ♕h5 and ♗c4 or ♘g5 might cooperate successfully in a mating attack on f7, to give an example of what 'concrete' means.

To be fair, Monokroussos takes a moderate point of view in the 'concrete versus general' debate and the quote above is taken from an article in which he comments on Jacob Aagaard's three-question-method (from the book *Positional Play*) as being too general to be really useful.

But I would like to take it a bit further and put in doubt also

Monokroussos' second point, i.e. that method can help when you don't know what to do.

Look at the following position from a game of one of my students, Black to move.



The best option is either the immediate **1...a5** or first **1...♗xe3+ 2.♘xe3** and then **2... a5**. The dream position after 3.b5? ♘c5 illustrates what Black is aiming for. Since these moves are the best in this position, it is hard to argue against the statement that they somehow follow from the position. And it's very easy to explain them using standard strategic concepts. But that doesn't mean that 'questions of method' can bring them within reach when you don't just see them. General principles or guiding questions can bring you to all kinds of ideas in this position. My student played 1...f4 2.♗f2 ♗h4, with a kingside attack in mind. Maybe you choose the standard sacrifice 1... f4 2. ♗f2 e4 (or in reverse order) to put your knight on e5. It's also possible that questions of method made you reject the best moves: ...a5 weakens the light squares and ...♗xe3 improves White's silly knight on d1.

I'm sure that, for example, Aagaard can talk very instructively about this position. But his 'strong reasoning' is not the cause but rather the effect of his expertise. To assume that those who don't have this expertise, this enormous amount of finely differentiated knowledge, can themselves reason towards the good moves in a similar manner might very well be delusional.

For a King's Indian player like me (this game actually started as a Sveshnikov), the struggle to get a strong knight on c5 is very familiar, so 'recognizing similarities' seems a good description of how I hit upon the move ...a5. Using the example of chess in *Thinking Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman discusses 'intuition as recognition' in a similar way and this seems more fitting than the idea of a deductive methodology.

The idea of different approaches for the beginner and for the stronger player is also a core point in Jeremy Silman's review of *Move First Think Later* (on his site). I've been a bit critical about some aspects of Silman's works ('Mr. Hendriks picks me out as the high priest of idiotic teaching'), especially his extreme faith that careful study of the characteristics ('imbalances') will lead you to the good moves as well as the abundance of (to my mind) rather easy advice in these works. It's nice to see him take up the gauntlet and he even gives my book 'a heartfelt recommendation', although of course only after trying to fully neutralize my efforts. The following quotes exemplify his point:

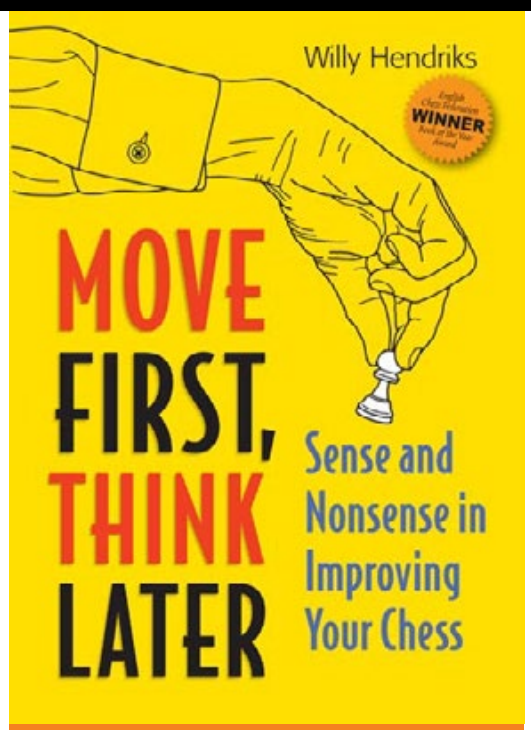
'So when Mr. Hendriks tells you that, armed with enough patterns, you can just reach out and play a move that at the very least makes some sense, he is completely correct. And that's why so many good players have applauded the book, since he's telling you a truth (note that it's not *the* truth, but just one truth based on playing strength). (...)

Here's the problem: what's true for titled players isn't true for the chess masses! When I tell people to look at tens of thousands of games, they go crazy and tell me I'm wrong, that I'm an idiot, that nobody has the time or inclination to do that, and that there must be better ways to improve. (...)

And this is where Mr. Hendriks and his fawning cadre of IMs and GMs drop the ball. They just don't seem to understand that most people aren't able to turn their fingers into magical move-making machines. (...)

As for my idea of imbalances (...) it was created as a shortcut to pattern recognition. Since most students were not willing to do it the old-fashioned way, I decided that imbalances would give them a full diet of patterns. (...)

Thus imbalances are, in effect, a digestible way to have chess hopefuls drink the "medicine" (patterns) they usually shy away from.'



'Using the example of chess in *Thinking Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman discusses "intuition as recognition" in a similar way.'

I'm very interested in the way people learn to play chess and I'm in no way ignoring 'the chess masses'. But I do think we are all learning in mostly the same way and that from our very first move we are busy to 'turn our fingers into move-making machines'. From the beginner, to the best of his abilities, up to Vladimir Kramnik (I wonder how many readers noticed that it is actually his hand that graces the cover of the book), on a more magical level.

Silman starts with a fair account of the importance of pattern recognition, but the words 'shortcut' and 'full diet' towards the end are revealing. There are no shortcuts and 'chess hopefuls' should not be sold illusions regarding this. To the justified question 'There must be better ways to improve' the honest 'No' is the best answer. And this is not bad news at all. The fact that there are no easy solutions available is what makes our game so interesting.

In his review on *The Week In Chess*, John Watson comes to the aid of some authors I criticize by pointing out that even if some books might not be correct from a theoretical point of view, they still can contain a lot of good and instructive chess. Furthermore, the authors' enthusiasm and inspiring style may add a lot to the students' motivation to get to work. Merijn van Delft makes a similar point in a review for the Dutch site *Schaaktalent.nl* and I completely agree with them. It's the content (the chess) and not the method that will bring profit, and I'm sure students can benefit from, for example, Silman's works by taking in the good chess. But I also know that there are a lot of people who buy promising books and skip the chess in search for the magical method, the restructuring of their thinking process, that will bring the good moves within reach.

Chess is 99% concrete

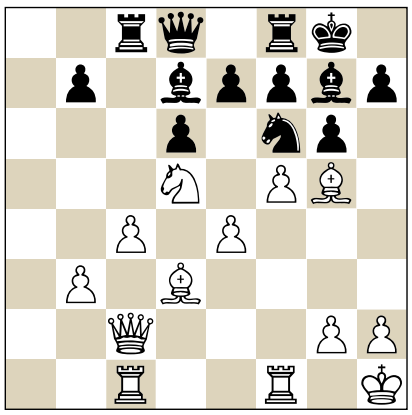
In popular psychology a distinction is sometimes made between those good at thinking in words and those good at thinking in images. This could lead to different strategies in learning chess, along the lines painted above. But to my mind, those good in language will not profit much from this quality in learning to play chess. Compare it to playing soccer: I could say a lot of sensible things about a free-kick 20 metres away from the goal, but the chance that I'll curve the ball in the upper left-hand corner like Ronaldo remains quite small.

In his review, Silman addresses my lack of confidence in the usefulness of lingual conceptual systems and advice in words: 'Yet he (and every grandmaster that has ever annotated a game or explained a move in some analysis) uses the same terminology I do in explaining the moves he plays.'

This is true, but I don't think these 'explanations' coincide with the way we arrive at those moves.

It is obvious that you can speak or write about a game in an instructive manner. But language works only in one direction here: it's useful in a descriptive way but it has far less value in a prescriptive way.

I'll try to illustrate the differences. White is to move in the next position.



Portisch-Reshevsky
Petropolis Interzonal 1973 (14)

White is better and he has more than one good move. But the idea chosen by Portisch is clearly the best and he finished the game in a very instructive manner.

20.♕f2! ♗c6 21.♕h4 ♗xd5 22.exd5 ♖e8 23.♖f3 ♘d7 24.♖cf1 ♗f6 25.♖h3 ♘f8 26.fxg6 fxg6 27.♗xg6 hxg6 28.♖xf6 1-0

I do think you can say some things about why this manoeuvre ♕f2-h4 is so very strong. But I don't think this says very much about the way Portisch arrived at it.

Generalities do not lead to these moves and likewise, out of this fragment, no general advice should be distilled. The actual lesson is not some advice like 'in the kingside attack, make sure your queen is participating to the maximum' or 'improve your worst piece'. It is ♕c2-f2-h4, with follow-ups like ♖f1-f3-h3, or doubling rooks on the f-file. To be more precise, what can be learned here is fully disclosed in the moves Portisch played, and attentively playing them over is all that is needed to learn the most from this fragment. The moves are the actual lesson, not some illustration of a more general principle.

And how much language is needed to communicate about this position? On a demo-board, you can get the necessary information across by waving alongside lines and diagonals, hammering with pieces, pointing at squares, making a few moves in a row for either side, changing the position slightly, making sounds and gestures of approval, disapproval, fear, happiness, and so on.

A famous dictum by Richard Teichmann goes 'Chess is 99 percent tactics'. According to Wikiquote, Andrew Soltis varied on this, saying 'Chess is really 99 percent calculation'. I would prefer another slight modification: 'Chess is 99 percent concrete'.

As Luke McShane noted in this magazine, 'Concrete can be taken to mean that positions are often – though clearly not always – best considered as being a lesson in themselves, rather than instances of a general theme; it doesn't mean studying tactics exclusively.' For example, the French manoeuvre we saw before (...♘c6-a7, followed by ...♗d7-b5) , is a strategic idea *and* a concrete piece of knowledge.

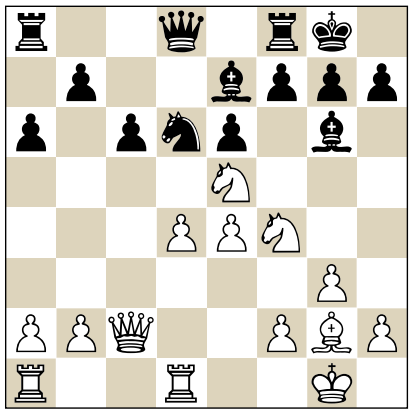
So that leaves 1 percent for the 'believers in the power of the word'. I don't want to be too strict, a few extra percents are negotiable, but the message should be clear. ('The move is the message' was the publisher's nice original idea for the book title.)

The hindsight problem

Part of the inspiration for MFTL stems from my interest in the devel-

opments in cognitive science, and I do think that these support (to some extent) my views on the chessplaying mind.

Take a look at the next position, White to move, and decide on the move you would play.



Gutman-Bakker
Leiden Open 2008 (1)

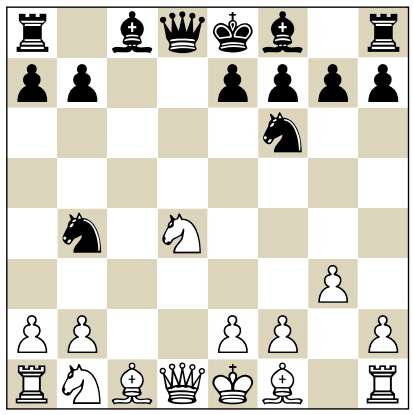
In several lectures I presented this position to club players of mixed strength, and about half of them found the best move, which is **19.h4!**, more or less deciding the game. Black has no decent response to the threat h5 and lost after a few more moves.

Some people mentioned the awkward position of the bishop on g6, suggesting that this led them to the move, but I doubt that this is the actual order, fully realizing it's a bit arrogant to make assumptions about other people's trains of thought. For myself, there is no better description than 'h4 just popped up in my mind'. The notion of the 'problematic bishop' is so much dependent on the move h4 that it's hardly imaginable to see the one without the other. John Watson's concept of 'the move is the idea' is very fitting here.

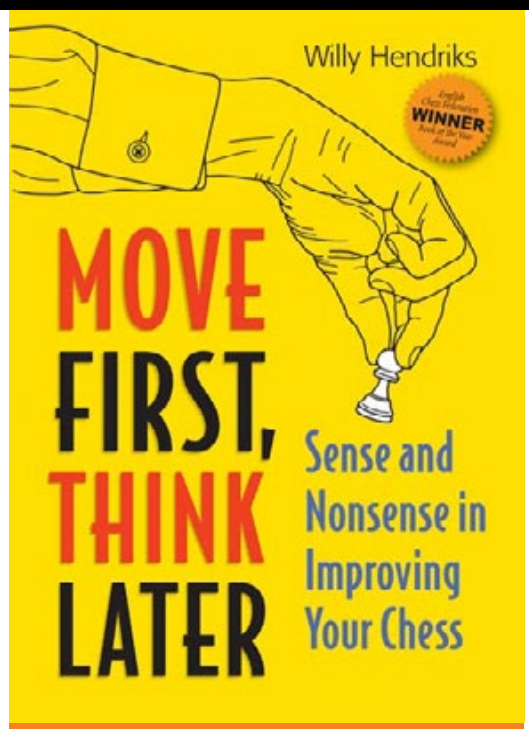
In psychology there has in recent years been an increasing interest in the role of the unconscious in decision processes. A lot of research points at the fact that what we (consciously) think and relate about these processes might be to some extent untrustworthy, deluded or fictitious. Hindsight bias – adjusting the past to what you know now – is one aspect of this phenomenon, and the respectable order of chess didactics is very much based on this delusion: confusing the after-the-fact narrative with the actual decision-making process.

If you now look back at the previous diagram, you immediately see h4, and it's very easy to get convinced it was the result of some reasoning process. And as a next step, you might come to the conclusion that everyone who attentively studies the position, ends up finding h4.

Once you know the solution, there is no turning back to the perspective of not knowing. Working as a chess trainer regularly reminds you of this, when a student is pondering over what you think is screaming to be seen. Look at the next position, Black to move.



It's not my intention to put this magazine's high level reputation at stake. For the pupil I showed it to a few days before writing this article it should have been peanuts as well, but she started thinking. After more than a minute she said 'Aha!' (finally, I thought) but then '1... ♘xa2!'. After recovering from the shock, I had to admit it did address some characteristics that I had missed completely.



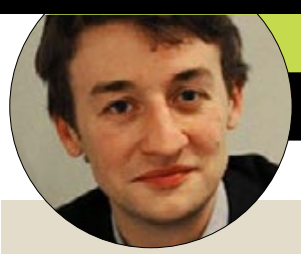
'After reading this book you will feel like Neo in *The Matrix*, when he discovers that his life so far was an illusion.'

Trust those inside

The hindsight trick is only one of many ways our (conscious) mind deludes us about what was really happening. This has led some psychologists to the metaphor of consciousness as some kind of PR-man, instead of a CEO. This man is only doing the publicity. He has no influence and maybe he's even misinformed and for the bigger part just making up stories.

So we started wondering about our next move and ended up wondering about who is in charge. The best thing to do might be feeding the chess playing beast inside instead of giving all kinds of advice to its conscious boss, who may well be not in charge at all.

In a review for *Rochade Europa*, Martin Rieger notes: 'After reading this book you will feel like Neo in the film *The Matrix*, when he discovers that his life so far was an illusion and that his real life will start only now.' A very flattering comparison, but, to keep some modesty: the illusionary aspects of our views on decision-making processes are here to stay. Some gain may be found in acknowledging this fact and fom stopping to worry too much about the right thinking process. Trust those inside – they go their own way anyway. ■



Luke McShane

History Repeating

Watching the Candidates' tournament in London has been a treat for chess fans around the world, and it naturally invites comparison with some of the great tournaments of the past. Who knows what the tournament books will have to say about London 2013? It's also natural to wonder what the chess of the future will look like. There's no doubt that the exceptional results yielded by Carlsen's extraordinary technique, stamina and perseverance will have been noted by many young players, and will have an enduring influence as result. It is curious, given that the tournaments of the past lasted so much longer, that the top players of today are generally younger than ever before.

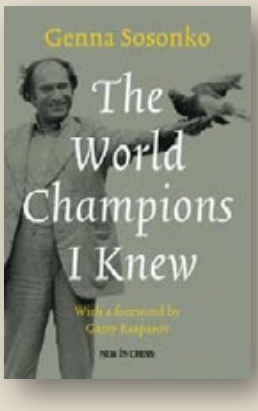
The experience of watching chess has been dramatically altered by the rise of the chess engine, but it's hard to speculate about the effects that will have in the future. Certainly, it is a shame that some of the mystique of the game is lost. When decisive errors and counter-errors can be identified with near certainty before the game is even over, it becomes harder to appreciate the extraordinary skill which the players are displaying. But then, a recent article published on the BBC website reminded me of the well-known story of 'The Turk' – once upon a time the human was the accessory and the engine was the main event.

Built in the late eighteenth century by Baron Wolfgang von Kempelen, The Turk consisted of a life-size model of a Turkish man, seated at a large cabinet. All comers were invited to play against the machine, after a showman had opened all the cabinet doors to display the intricate mechanisms inside. If you didn't know already, it will come as no great surprise that The Turk was an elaborate illusion, as the cabinet afforded sufficient space for a skilled chess player of modest proportions to operate the machine from within. But at the time, The Turk caused quite a sensation. Automatons were apparently rather popular back then. A bizarre precursor to The Turk was the 'Digesting Duck', invented by Jacques de Vaucanson in 1739, a surprisingly lifelike mechanical duck which could eat grain, and appeared to defecate as well. Clearly, automata fired people's imaginations, and it is claimed in *The Even More Complete Chess Addict* that 'The Reverend Edmund Cartwright, an obscure country clergyman and poet, visited The Turk in London. Inspired by the thought that, if it were possible to construct a machine to play chess, a weaving mill would present few problems, he set about creating his power loom, changing the face of the clothing industry and playing a major part in the Industrial revolution'.

Not everyone was taken in – Edgar Allen Poe wrote an essay describing his theories on The Turk in excruciating detail. He rejects various contemporary theories, such as that The Turk was operated with some kind of magnet, (we learn that 'the exhibiter... will suffer the most powerful loadstone to remain even upon the box during the whole of the exhibition') and advances the idea that human agency is involved. Most amusing of all he notes that 'The Automaton does not invariably win the game. Were the machine a pure machine this would not be the case – it would always win. The *principle* being discovered by which a machine can be made to *play* a game of chess, an extension of the same principle would enable it to *win* a game – a farther extension would enable it to *win* all games – that is, to beat any possible game of an antagonist'. Several decades of computer chess history suggest that matters are a little more complicated than that, and indeed it is astonishing to me that anybody might once have thought otherwise.

The sense of mystery in looking at another era is something which I felt deeply while reading Genna Sosonko's book *The World Champions I knew*. It contains portraits of Capablanca, Alekhine, Euwe, Botvinnik, Smyslov, Tal and Petrosian. They have been published in books and magazines before, but I'm delighted that they have been presented in this engaging compilation. Personally, I found the piece on Capablanca the most unusual, seen through the eyes of Capablanca's widow Olga,

who Sosonko met decades after the death of the Cuban champion. Married several times, to an officer in the White Army, to Capablanca himself, to an Olympic gold medallist and to an American war hero, she seems to have led a charmed existence which she very much enjoyed relating (not to mention embellishing). Sosonko explains that he 'realized that, even out of the retouched past, the unbiased listener could always coax out the traits, important and minor, of probably the most legendary Champion in the history of the game.' For example, Olga recalled an 'old, roguish florist in Havana. He sold us some flowers that were not fresh, and I got very angry and protested. And Capa apologized profusely and bowed to him, like I had never seen. Yes, an old toothless Cuban florist...'

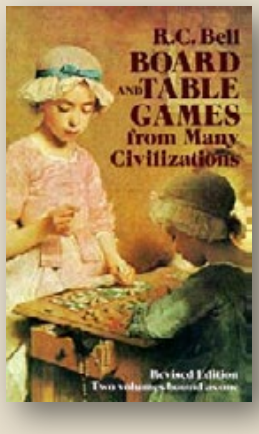


The World Champions I Knew
With a foreword by Garry Kasparov
Genna Sosonko
New In Chess, 2012

I never knew that Tal, who adorns the cover of this book, was severely injured in a bar in Havana in 1966, when he was hit on the head with a bottle. The essay on Tal (beautifully titled 'A Name as a Gunshot') is certainly another highlight, and this extensive essay has only ever appeared before in Dutch. Sosonko is particularly well-placed to write about Tal, both for having known him well, and having an intimate familiarity with the all-encompassing Soviet system which dominated Tal's life. Most interesting for me was the apparent tension between Tal's flamboyant personality and lifestyle, and his (qualified) affection for Soviet life. Sosonko even goes so far as to speculate: 'The paradox is that that time and that system gave rise to a great chess player. I'll risk suggesting that Mikhail Tal, thrown into the flow of Western life for 20 years and becoming Michael Tal, would have spun in the whirlwind of permissiveness and pleasure with such force that chess would simply have dissolved in those pleasures.' Indeed, Sosonko does not shy away from writing about Tal's fondness for alcohol and drugs, and the result is an account of Tal's life which is both honest, personal, and extremely warm. *The World Champions I Knew* is not a book about chess, but a book about people, and highly recommended at that.

Of course, the history of chess goes back well before this century, but it's a subject I have struggled to connect with in the past. Still, I was curious to see Yuri Averbakh's book *A History of Chess*, published by Russell Enterprises. As Kasparov points out in the foreword, 'The more recent history of chess as a cultural phenomenon, which permeates all the spheres of social life, is obscured for young chessplayers by the current computer boom and dominant competitive factor'. Like many players, I suspect, I had a vague notion that chess probably, but not definitely, originated in India, and was faintly related to games called 'Chaturanga' and 'Shatranj'. Averbakh's book appealed to me for two rather philistine reasons. Firstly, the author is of course a great chess player and endgame theoretician, and I thought for that reason that he might bring an engaging angle to a subject which has often seemed to me rather dry. Secondly, and just as importantly, the book is a very short one – well under a hundred pages. Nevertheless, it is obvious that Averbakh has conducted a considerable amount of research into the history of the game, and formulated his own ideas about the development of the game over a lengthy period.

It is natural enough to consider chess as a game that evolved from other simpler games. It seems that those simpler games were probably dice games, specifically race games similar to Pachisi, which many children play, or Ludo as I knew it myself.



Averbakh also notes the similarity between the four-handed game Chaturanga, and a game called Thaayam. I was fascinated to learn how they made the dice for these games, when Averbakh quoted a passage from Robert Bell's *Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations*.

'When the rice is almost ripe, women and girls from the villages of South India spend all day in the field to scare the birds, and to pass the time, they play games; the most popular is Thaayam. The board for the game is drawn right on the ground, with small sticks used for pieces, and the dice are made from tamarind seeds. These seeds are brown, cubic in shape, each of the six surfaces slightly convex. When one of the sides of the seed is scrubbed against a rock, the outer husk comes off, exposing the white core. Four such seeds with three sides ground down to the white core and three other sides left brown are used as dice. Sometimes cowry shells are used as dice. Four people play the game, each has four dice.'

Thaayam, a possible precursor of chess, is played with tamarind seeds.

Still, it is all very well to hypothesize that chess developed from a dice game due to a passing similarity in the setup of the boards. But Averbakh attempts to map that development in more detail, to answer the rather reasonable objection from the British chess historian Harold Murray: 'The

theory that chess was developed from the earlier race games includes the hypothesis that some innovator obtained the consent of his contemporaries and changed all the terminology in order to emulate a military game. I find that hypothesis improbable.'

Averbakh contends that it was possible. Dice games, we learn, were not just a means for entertaining human scarecrows, but were popular among the nobility as well. A passage from an Indian epic called the Mahabharata, written in the first century AD, asks rhetorically, 'For how can a man born a Kshatriya [one of the military elite] and skilful with a bow, being challenged (to a dice game) turn away from it, even if he would lose his life?' Averbakh speculates that it was not such a great leap to replace the pieces first with racing chariots and later with military chariots, and thence introduce the rest of the army, especially bearing in mind that a challenge to a dice game was considered to be a matter of honour. Further down the line, he examines how, when the game switched from a four-player game to a two-player game, it was possible for the goal to change from capturing the opponent's pieces to capturing the king, and most important of all, how the dice were finally dropped from the game. Averbakh's view is that the influence of the rational Greeks brought about that change. Apparently the campaigns of Alexander the Great in 327-325 BC in northwestern India brought the civilizations into contact, and there was considerable trade and cultural exchange thereafter. Averbakh insures his theory against the charge of occidentalism by pointing out that he has generally called upon Indian sources to support his views.

Averbakh's theory is an intriguing one, even if not all the links in the chain are equally compelling. For some reason, the less one knows about these things, the easier it is to be cynical about this kind of historical analysis. Allan Beardsworth, who has captained the England team, writes an entertaining blog about various topics including chess (https://allanbeardsworth.wordpress.com). Browsing there recently, I came across an amusing cartoon, which suggests that the pillars and lintels of the ancient English monument Stonehenge were actually erected for the profane purpose of hanging curtains to conceal prizes in a prehistoric game show, rather than meeting the modern interpretation, as elaborate timekeeping devices. The fact that we will never know the truth doesn't detract from the interest in the observations, and Averbakh cuts an intriguing path through history to explain how the game shaped into its present-day form. One of the step-

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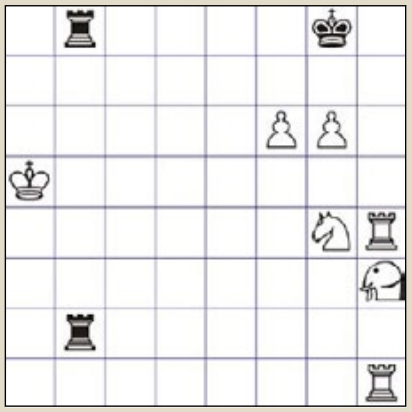
ping stones along the way was a game called Shatranj, which is rather close to modern chess with a few main differences. First, instead of bishops we had elephants, which moved exactly two squares diagonally (e.g. from c1 to e3 or a3), and could jump over the square in between. Second, the piece presently represented by a queen (the 'fers') had drastically reduced mobility. Starting from d1, it could move one square diagonally in any direction, but that is it. Thirdly, capturing all the opponent's pieces, without them being able to capture your last piece immediately, was sufficient for victory, and finally, pawns never advance two squares and may only promote to a 'fers'. It is not too difficult to imagine how, over a considerable period, the elephants might extend their perspective into those of bishops, but I found myself fascinated by Averbakh's theory as to how the feeble 'fers' gave way to its powerful modern replacement. I don't know how his theories would be considered by seasoned historians, but for a neophyte, this book was a great introduction.

I began to wonder to myself, if Shatranj was in many ways similar to the modern game, what kind of questions did they ask themselves about this game? Averbakh's book contains a good number of photographs and illustrations, but just a couple of traditional chess diagrams, referring to a rather concrete Shatranj position. I turned to a relatively new 'old favourite', Christian Hesse's *The Joys of Chess*. It seems some constructed positions such as this one became famous:

'The fact that we will never know the truth doesn't detract from the interest in the observations, and Averbakh cuts an intriguing path through history to explain how the game shaped into its present- day form.'

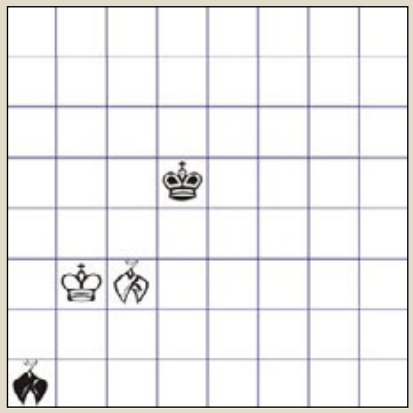


Dilaram's mate

Note that the piece on square h3 is an 'elephant' or alfil, which moves two squares with jumps.
Therefore: **1.♖h8+ ♔xh8 2.♘h3-f5+ ♔g8 3.♖h8+ ♔xh8 4.g7+ ♔g8 5.♘h6** Mate.

Pretty, but not especially refined. But a couple of pages later I stumbled on an absolute gem of a position, and better still, one using the Shatranj 'fers' piece.

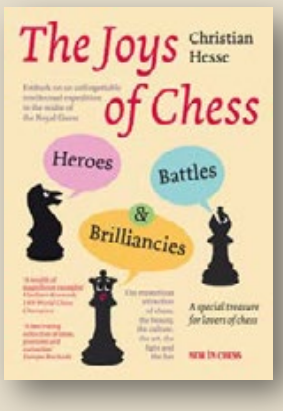
It is White to play and win (and remember that White's goal is to capture the fers on a1 without losing his own). This problem, composed by the legendary Shatranj champion as-Suli as far back as the 10th century, has real depth, and it turns out that Averbakh (elsewhere) has analysed that too! A couple of observations to get you thinking – the 'fers' on a1 cannot presently be captured, but the one on c3 effectively traps it, so that ...♘a1-b2 is always met by ♘c3xb2. But 1.♔a2 ♔c4! would allow Black to recapture the white piece, so that won't do. Furthermore, the initial position is a sort of zugzwang – with Black to move, 1...♔e4 would be met with ♘c3-b4 followed by ♘b4-a3, ♔b3-a2xa1. Likewise, a manoeuvre with ♘c3-d2-c1 (with ♔b3-c2-b1xa1) is possible if Black's king goes the other way.



as-Suli

There are many possible lines of play, but the crux of the winning method is a surprising manoeuvre which appears to free the trapped fers on a1: **1.♔b4 ♔d6 2.♔c4 ♔e6 3.♔d4 ♔f6 4.♔d5 ♔f7 5.♔e5 ♔g7 6.♔e6 ♔g8 7.♔f6 ♔h8 8.♔g6 ♔g8 9.♘d2! ♔f8 10.♘c1 ♔e7 11.♔f5** and White goes to capture the fers in the corner. ■

The Joys of Chess
Heroes, Battles & Brilliancies
Christian Hesse
New In Chess, 2011



A History of Chess
From Chaturanga to the Present Day
Yuri Averbakh
Russell Enterprises, 2012

Hans Ree

Dark Times

The eight strongest players in the world contesting a double round-robin; the AVRO tournament of 1938 had much in common with the recent London Candidates' tournament. Hans Ree had almost relegated Tartakower's daily reports from 1938 to the dustbin.

My wife saved me from the excesses of a fierce campaign that she had initiated herself. She wanted to clean out our house by filling one big refuse bag every day for an indefinite time, at least until the result would be noticeable. 'What if we both died in a plane crash and other people would have to perform this task, sieving nuggets worth saving from heaps of books and papers spread over three floors? It's too much to ask of them.'

I remembered a play by Ionesco in which a corpse keeps growing and growing, leaving less and less room for the living occupants of the apartment. The encroaching mass of dead paper in our place had to be stopped, so I joined the fight.

Everybody knows what happens then. At first you are conscientious, throwing away only the things you are sure you will not miss. Decisions do not come easy. You re-read letters, old notebooks, magazines. There are loads of books that you will probably never open again and that won't fetch a penny now. Yes, but they are still able to evoke memories.

This way you make no progress. After a while you really start to throw away things and after you have filled your first or second bag, a mad cleaning frenzy takes hold of you, as if by relegating the past to the dustbin you might give yourself a new life.

My wife came to see if I had already entered the spirit of the operation and was just in time to prevent me from throwing away three school exercise books from the 1930s. Glued to the pages were Dutch newspaper reports about Max Euwe's two world championship matches against Alekhine and about the AVRO tournament of 1938. 'Are you crazy?' she asked.

Forgive me for this tale of domestic life. As the French writer René-François de Chateaubriand put it in his *Memoirs from the other side of the grave*, illustrious men should be silent about their exploits and be commemorated by a nameless voice that comes from the heart of nations and the depth of ages We, however, the *vulgus*, are allowed to speak about ourselves, for if *we* don't, nobody will.

Chateaubriand served as ambassador and Foreign Minister for France and that he includes himself in the *vulgus* may not betray excessive modesty, but rather high ambition.

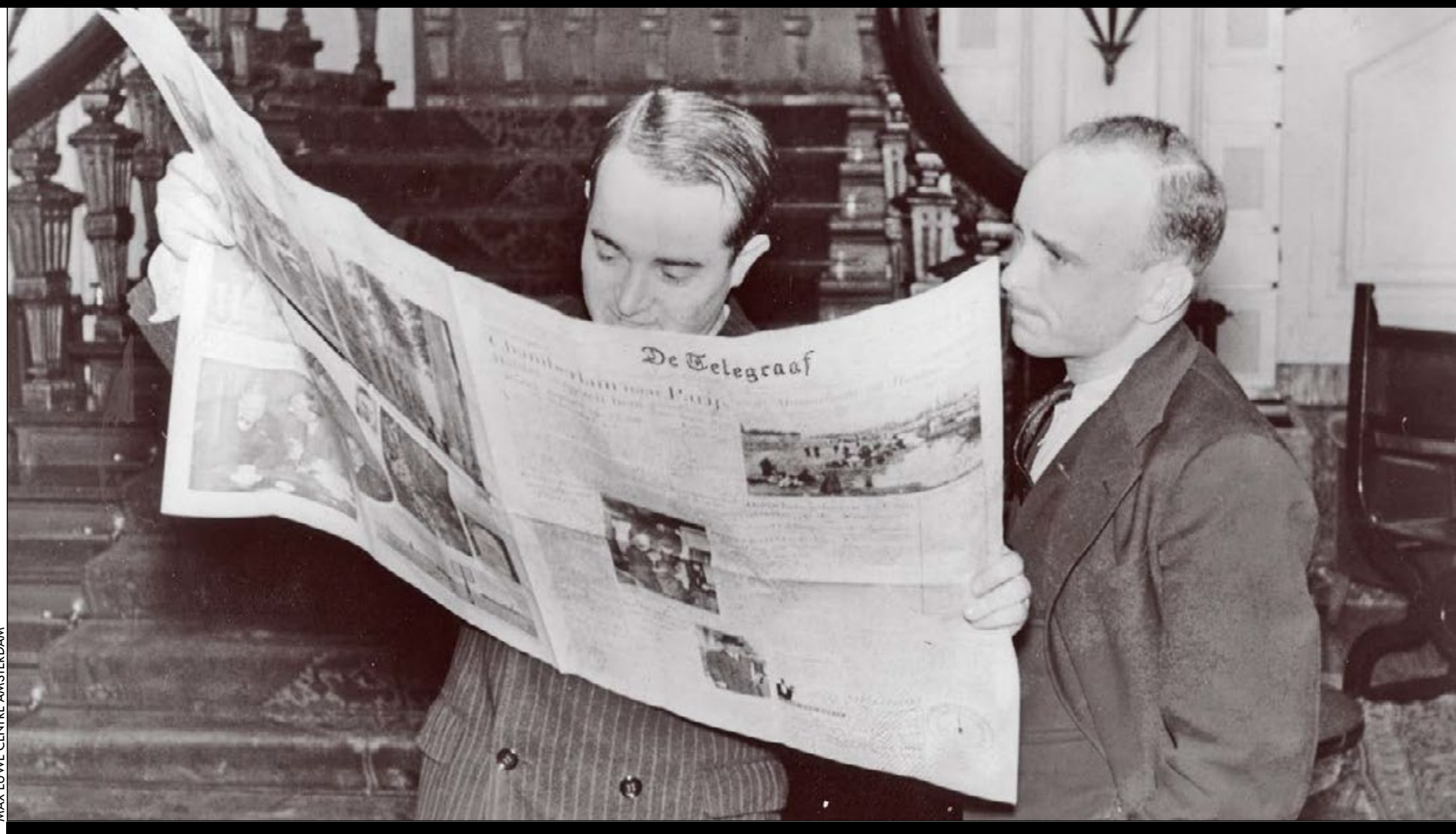
Tartakower comes to Holland

During the recent London Candidates' tournament I read the clippings about the AVRO tournament, which was similar in many respects. I don't know how the notebook came into my possession. The cover bears the name W.F. Apking, which is not familiar to me, but both there and elsewhere there are many repetitions of the name J.C. Apkings, with small variations in handwriting, as if a youngster is practising a signature.

This must have been Jan Apking, whom I used to know well from the Amsterdam chess circles. I must have played several games against him. In 1938 he was probably about 12 years old. The exercises, in geometry, algebra, French, German and English, seem too advanced for a boy of that age, so he might have used a notebook from an older family member for his clippings. I am grateful that he preserved them, but my thanks would come too late, as he died in 1999.

The clippings were from the Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf* and a related paper *De Courant/Nieuws van den Dag* (The Newspaper/Daily News) which shared some of the former's content, but appeared later in the day and carried more news about Amsterdam.

For important chess events such as Euwe's matches and the AVRO tournament, *De Telegraaf* would engage Savielly Tartakower. It also had a Dutch chess writer, Willem Schelfhout, known as Wats because of his initials. Tartakower's contributions were



MAX EUWE CENTRE AMSTERDAM

Savielly Tartakower's writings in *De Telegraaf* were not only popular with Dutch readers. Salo Flohr and Samuel Reshevsky were also curious what the grand old man had to say about them during the AVRO tournament.

signed, those by Wats or by an occasional reporter who played the role of the chess innocent – but a respectful one – were not.

It was not always clear whether Tartakower really wrote everything that appeared under his name. When he quotes an obscure little rhyme by the Flemish political activist René de Clercq or a poem by the Dutch poet and diplomat Constantijn Huygens, it seems obvious that the merry Wats had not only translated Tartakower's writings, but sometimes embellished them a bit.

Full-page treatment

I already knew it, but it still strikes me how much space there was for chess. All 56 games were printed in *De Telegraaf*, many of them annotated by Tartakower, and on some days the chess stories – round reports, games with analysis, interviews and human interest stories – occupied almost a full page, a big page that is, almost twice the size of modern tabloids.

I don't know how many people visited the tournament. I have been present at Dutch chess events with more than a thousand spectators a day, and I suppose it was no different at the AVRO tournament.

Such newspaper coverage and on-the-spot spectator interest has been replaced by Internet reports which, to me, still have an eerie quality – as if a tournament doesn't really exist when it's only followed on the Internet.

At the London Candidates' there was room for about 300 spectators-in-the-flesh, and I have read that the space was often only half filled. In an interview organizer Andrew Paulson said that this was exactly the way he had wanted it, as potential sponsors would be impressed by the number of Internet hits and live human beings would only be in the way. This was difficult to believe. I think Paulson would be delighted when a full stadium could be filled with chess enthusiasts, but that's not likely ever to happen.

> 'Sonas has called AVRO the 'most elite tournament' of all time, as it had the strongest eight players of the world and nobody else.'

Gigantic lobes

There they came, the chess heroes treading on Dutch soil at the start of November 1938. Only Reuben Fine had already been in the Netherlands for several months. At the time he was married to a Dutch woman and he was fluent enough in Dutch to speak on Dutch radio now and then.

I was reminded of the reminiscences of Hein Donner in his book *The King* about another great Dutch tournament, Groningen 1946, which he had visited as a 19-year-old.

Donner wrote: 'And then I saw Botvinnik! Smaller than the others, perhaps barely 2.75 meters, but with the unruffled face of the man who has seen it all and who has severed the

Hans Ree

ties with the sufferings of the ultimate world; his eyes turned inward, rejoicing as it were in the deep delight of his rich realm of thought. I noticed the strange curvature of his forehead and as if in a glass skull I could see his gigantic lobes, which had reinvented the game of chess and given it a new meaning. There he stood, the tremendous one.'

Dutch chess enthusiasts may have looked at the participants of the AVRO tournament with similar tremblings, such was the stature of chess champions at that time.

Some of the participants called it the greatest chess tournament ever, with good reason, and even now there are good grounds to call it the greatest tournament of all time.

The American chess metrician Jeff Sonas has called AVRO the 'most elite tournament' of all time, as according to his rating system it had the strongest eight players of the world and nobody else. Add to this, for seriousness, that it was a double round-robin.

Youth triumphed

Have a look at the tournament table. There was World Champion Alexander Alekhine, two ex-champions, José Raúl Capablanca and Max Euwe, and the future champion Mikhail Botvinnik. Youth, represented by Paul Keres (22) and Reuben Fine (24), triumphed. Note that Keres, who would be declared tournament winner on tiebreak, won only three games. Under the rules of the London Candidates', victory would have gone to Fine.

Alekhine's result showed that he would have a hard time defending his title against the younger generation. Capablanca's result was disappointing. He turned 50 during the tournament and later it was written that he had struggled with health problems. Capablanca would die within four years, on 8 March 1942. Salo Flohr's score was dismal, but there were extenuating circumstances.

In 1937 Flohr had been appointed by FIDE to challenge Alekhine. Though FIDE had not yet gained authority over the world championship, a match between Alekhine and Flohr, to be organized by the Czech shoe manufacturing company Bata, seemed like becoming reality, until it was summarily wrecked by political events.

On 30 September 1938, the infamous Munich Agreement, which delivered Sudetenland into Hitler's hands, was signed. Other parts of Czechoslovakia were taken by Hungary and Poland. Through these events, Flohr, originally a Polish Jew who had become a naturalized Czech citizen, had not only lost his match, but also his adopted country. What was left of Czechoslovakia would be occupied by Germany in March 1939.

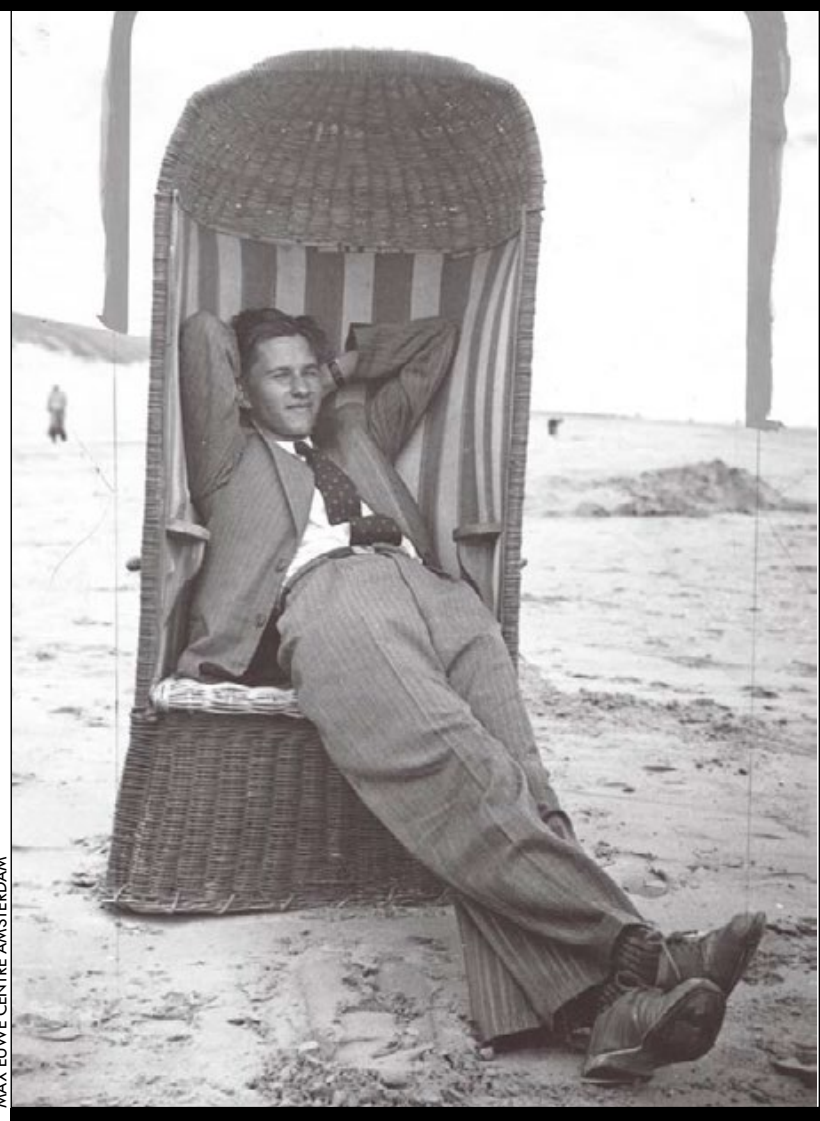
Alekhine holds his cards

It had been the intention of the AVRO broadcasting company that their tournament would produce a challenger for Alekhine, who however made it clear from the start that he would keep a free hand in choosing his next opponent. Alekhine named Samuel Reshevsky as the favourite to win the tournament (a pleasant sign of modesty, writes Tartakower) and at the opening ceremony declared himself ready to play a match against any participant of this great event, be it the winner or the tailender, as they would all be worthy opponents.

A fine compliment to the organizers, wrote Tartakower. But of course it also meant that Alekhine could do as he wanted. He had signed a vague contract with AVRO in which he had declared himself willing to play the winner, but under conditions which would be settled later and, most importantly, not before he had played other matches against opponents of his choice.

AVRO 1938

1	Paul Keres	**8½**
2	Reuben Fine	**8½**
3	Mikhail Botvinnik	**7½**
4	Max Euwe	**7**
5	Samuel Reshevsky	**7**
6	Alexander Alekhine	**7**
7	José Raúl Capablanca	**6**
8	Salo Flohr	**4½**



MAX EUWE CENTRE AMSTERDAM

Paul Keres, the 22-year-old co-winner of the AVRO tournament, enjoys a free day on the beach.

Without clearly mentioning a favourite, Tartakower wrote that for him 'the mechanism of the chess struggle has been developed most deeply with Botvinnik.' He also took the opportunity to state that the young generation had not really created a new style, but only improvements on what Tartakower in the past had called the hypermodern movement, but which he now, never at loss for a catchy expression, preferred to call the secessionist school of chess.

Everyone was in a good mood at the start of the tournament. Dutch hospitality and love of chess were praised, though some misgivings were raised about AVRO's decision to play the tournament in 10 different towns and cities.

Capablanca declared that he was in excellent health. In the Carlton hotel in Amsterdam, where the players were staying, Alekhine still acted as a king surrounded by courtiers. Keres was quiet and modest, as he would remain all his life.

On the brink of war

When big newspaper pages were reserved for chess, it was not because nothing else of importance was going on. Europe was on the brink of the most horrible war in history. Chateaubriand, who I mentioned earlier, wrote in his *Memoirs* that Napoleon had brought war to such an extreme that it had ended the feasibility of war forever. The door of war was closed, he wrote, and could never again be opened, because it was blocked by the dead bodies of millions of victims. He should have been right.

The advantage of newspaper clippings over a digitalized archive is that on the back you may find things you were not looking for. The other side of the pages with the chess reports in *De Telegraaf* was often about the political crisis in Europe and about the fate of the Jews who tried to escape from Hitler's Germany. All players would be perturbed by this news, but Flohr would have been most deeply affected, of course.

On the back of the chess reports I read that the French Prime Minister Daladier declared under tremendous applause that a loyal agreement should be reached with Germany and that war would never be a solution. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese fled their cities because of the advance of the Japanese troops. A German press campaign against the democracies was denounced. In London, the British Prime Minister Chamberlain spoke about the fate of German Jewish refugees. Palestine, British Guyana, Tanganyika, Rhodesia and Kenya were mentioned as possible places of refuge within the British empire.

Germans gathered outside the Dutch embassy in Berlin because they had heard that the Netherlands might give transit visas to refugees, but they gathered in vain.

Members of the Dutch Parliament put questions to the Minister of Justice Carel Goseling about the harsh treatment of German refugees, who were stopped at the Dutch border and sent back to Germany. There is mention of a suicide at the border railway station. Goseling stood for a very restrictive policy towards the entry of refugees; his boss, Prime Minister Colijn, called them undesirable aliens.

In Parliament, Goseling said that indeed some German women had become emotional when they discovered that they were going to be sent back, but that calm had been restored quickly. Goseling himself would die in 1941 in the German concentration camp Buchenwald, where he was taken as a hostage. One of the people who witnessed his death was the brilliant Dutch chess writer Evert Straat, a hostage himself who survived the camp.

> 'AVRO had been a great tournament, but it had no follow-up, because of the interference of what Tartakower had called "a higher power".'

Only once did I see a glimpse of the coming catastrophe on the chess pages. An anonymous reporter, a man who knew or pretended to know very little about chess, wrote that there were seven national flags on the stage. The flag of Czechoslovakia is red and white with a triangular blue indentation that can be extended at will. The Estonian colours are sombre and full of premonition; white, blue and black.

A friend of the reporter points out Mrs Capablanca and Mrs Botvinnik. The old and the new Russia, says the reporter, not referring to the age of the two Russian ladies, but to the Russia of the emigrants and the Russia that has not emigrated yet. Somewhere Tartakower writes that a higher power has destroyed Flohr's preferential FIDE shares. But apart from these brief allusions, politics is not mentioned on the chess pages.

Off like a rocket

Fine started off like a rocket, scoring an almost unbelievable 5½ points in the first six games. There is a tournament book by Euwe, who wrote the game annotations, but not the round reports. I don't know who did. Whoever it was, after the fifth round he wrote that first place had already been decided and the further struggle would only be about who would finish second. 'It is about time for the other participants to reconcile themselves to this fact.' With nine rounds still to go, he was a bit premature, but Fine must have seemed a superman by that time.

In Round 7, Fine lost to Keres, but he was still leading Keres by half a point. During the second leg Keres proved the old maxim that the player who goes through a tournament without losses will win. Before the last round he and Fine were equal, but Keres had the better Sonneborn-Berger tiebreak score and would be declared tournament winner if they drew their game, in which Keres had white.

It ended not with a bang but a whimper; an uneventful draw of 19 moves. Fine went to the telegraph office to send a message to his mother and Keres said that his first telegram would be to his newspaper in Tallinn. On the same day Euwe already delivered the first pages of his tournament book to the publisher.

Two mathematicians

Under the headline 'Two students of mathematics about their chess success' Tartakower extensively interviewed the victors. Not surprisingly, Keres said that it was every chess master's dream to play for the world championship. 'Alekhine has, according to my opinion, not yet spoken his last word,

Hans Ree

though even in his heyday weak spots in his way of playing could be spotted.' It seems that Keres was not particularly afraid of Alekhine if there were to be a match.

In the light of what we know about his subsequent chess career, it is a surprise how serious he was then about a career as a mathematician. Right after the tournament an exam was waiting for him. Tartakower asks him how long his studies will take. 'Three more years if I settle for being a teacher, but I may decide to go for a PhD,' says Keres.

Fine also seems set on a career in mathematics, which he said he had already studied for four and a half years, with six months still to go. Fine said that he was always aware that his task in life would not be chess, but science.

He also was clear about the fact that not he, but Keres had earned the right to challenge Alekhine. Much later, in 1973, in his book *Bobby Fischer's Conquest of the World's Chess Championship*, Fine would write that it would have been fair if, after Alekhine's death in 1946, he and Keres had been declared interim World Champions.

From coming close to earning the right to challenge Alekhine, whatever that right meant at the time, to being interim World Champion – that was a small step for Fine, but a giant leap for the rest of us.

As we know, both Keres and Fine would abandon their scientific studies, Keres for chess, for which we can be grateful, and Fine for psychoanalysis.

A few days later Alekhine said to Tartakower: 'I expect a challenge from Keres, for he can hardly expect from me, the World Champion, that I will ask him to play against me. I will surely accept his challenge, certainly when AVRO will give its support.'

What was not generally known at the time was that immediately after the last round of the AVRO tournament Alekhine had talks in the Carlton hotel about his next world championship match, not with Keres, but with Botvinnik.

AVRO and its aftermath

While the players were packing their bags to leave, a reporter of *De Telegraaf* (probably Wats) had a final interview with Alekhine, who complained about the hardship of the tournament, played in 10 towns and cities.

'Would you believe that during my game against Fine I thought I would collapse of exhaustion? Never again in my life will I allow anyone to talk me into something like this, even if they offered me three times as much. Do you know that I have lost seven pounds during this tournament? And do you see Mr. Alving (a representative of AVRO) walking around there? The man didn't even play, but hasn't he grown 10 years older during these three weeks of excitement and trotting about?'

A year later, on 1 September, 1939, the war in Europe would begin with the German invasion of Poland. Salo Flohr had stayed in the Netherlands for some time after the AVRO tournament, then moved to Sweden and subsequently found refuge in the Soviet Union. Keres became a Soviet citizen after his country Estonia had lost its short-lived independence by being first overrun by the Soviet Union, then by Germany and then by the Soviet Union again. Capablanca would die in 1942 and Alekhine in 1946, at a time when the British Chess Federation had agreed to organize his match against Botvinnik. Fine, a gifted but quirky character, became a prominent psychoanalyst. Reshevsky would play a Candidates' match against Viktor Kortchnoi as late as 1968. Euwe would become a computer scientist and a respected president of FIDE and Botvinnik, well, we all know about Botvinnik.

AVRO had been a great tournament, but it had no follow-up because of the interference of what Tartakower had called 'a higher power'. ■

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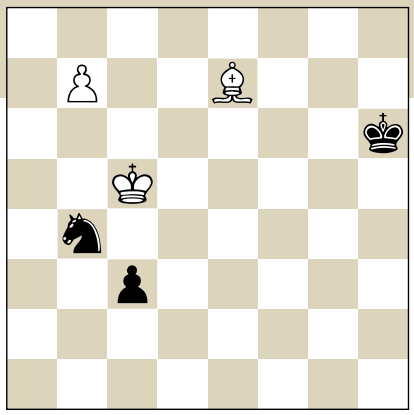
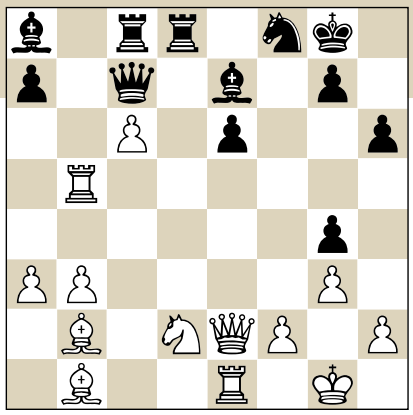
Beware: Brilliancy! Solutions of page 83



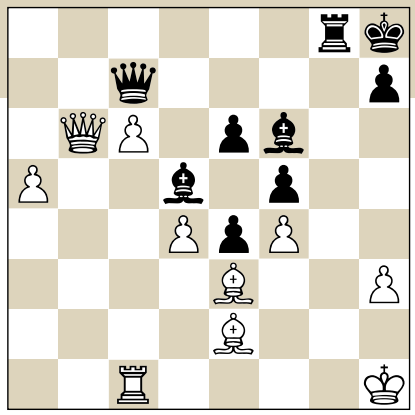
1. Michielsen-Miedema
Dutch team championship 2011

66.♗d6! ♔g5 66...♘d3+ 67.♔b5 c2 68.♗a3+–. **67.♔xb4 c2 68.♗f4+!** and wins.



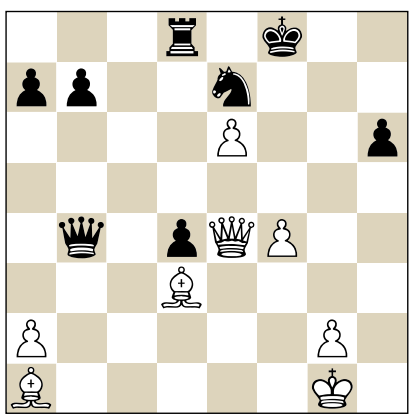
2. Hodgson-Thipsay
Eastbourne British championship 1991

28...♖xd2! 29.♕xd2 ♕xc6 and wins.



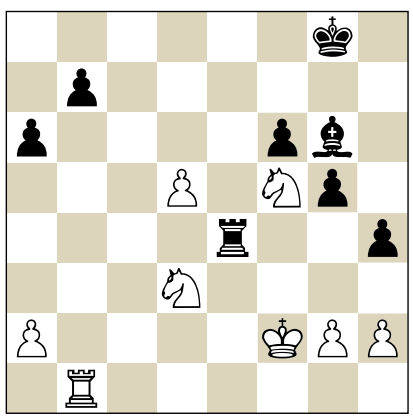
3. Jakovljevic-Ivkov
2000

33...♕g7! 34.♖g1 ♕xg1+! 35.♗xg1 e3+ 36.♔h2 ♖g2+ 37.♔h1 ♖xe2 Mate.



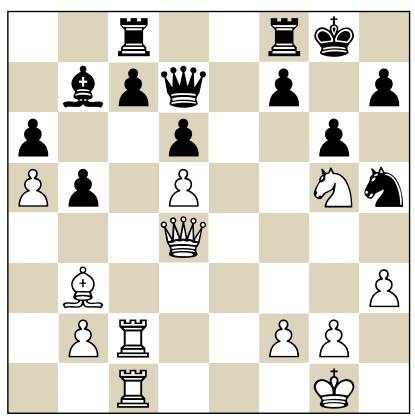
4. Shen Yang-Nemcova
Ekaterinburg women world team championship 2007

34.♕e5! ♘g8 Or 34...♔g8 35.♕f6 ♖f8 36.♕xh6+–. **35.♗b2!!** Heading to the neighbouring diagonal! All of a sudden the 'quiet' threat 36.♕c7! is unavoidable, for instance: **35...b6 36.♕c7 ♕e7 37.♗a3!** and wins.



5. Tyomkin-Boim
Israeli team championship1999

40.♘h6+! ♔g7 41.♘g4!! ♖xg4 42.♖xb7+ ♔h6 42...♔g8 43.d6 ♖d4 44.d7 ♔f8 45.♘b4+–. **43.♖b4!** Now the resulting ending is won for white as his king is faster getting to the queenside after **43...♖xb4 44.♘xb4 ♔g7** No better is 44...a5 45.d6 ♗f5 46.♘c6 ♔g7 47.♘xa5 ♔f7 48.♘b7! etc. **45.♘xa6 ♔f7 46.♔e3** and wins.



6. Nijboer-Jakovenko
Wijk aan Zee 2007

26.♘e6!! fxe6 27.dxe6 ♕e7 27...♕e8 28.♖xc7 d5 29.e7+–. **28.♖xc7! ♖xc7** 28...♘f5 29.♕b6 ♕g5 30.e7+ d5 31.g3+–. **29.♖xc7 ♕xc7 30.e7+ d5 31.♕h8+!!** and wins.

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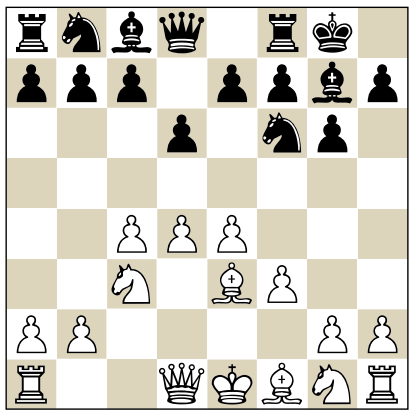
Jan Timman

Svidler's repertoire

The Sämisch Variation of the King's Indian was part of the regular repertoire of several great players of the past: Botvinnik, Spassky, Portisch, Polugaevsky and Karpov. And I am talking about the variation in its purest form. The starting position arose after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3.



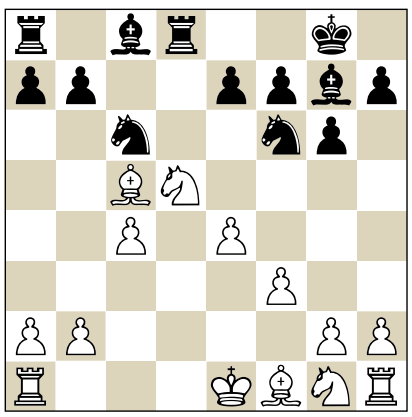
The bishop sortie 6.♗g5 was never played. One of the main aims of the variation was to prevent the thematic advance ...c7-c5.

Starting from this position, Black had three main systems: the classical one with 6...e5; the Taimanov Defence, which starts with 6...♘c6, and the system with 6...c6 and 7...a6, aiming for ...b7-b5. In most cases it was instructive to see how Botvinnik and Co. managed to get a strategic plus against this.

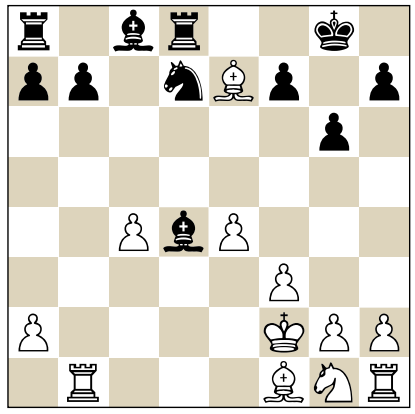
Black also had a few unusual defensive systems enabling him to prepare ...c7-c5 anyway: 6...♘bd7, 6...b6 and 6...a6. That latter move has a certain point. After 7.♗d3 Black can sacrifice a pawn with 7...c5, after which the white bishop turns out to be slightly misplaced on d3. With this pawn sacrifice I defeated Bobotsov in Amsterdam 1971. I had not thought it up myself, but had seen it as a suggestion in the then Russian weekly *64*.

Incidentally, I mainly played the Sämisch Variation as White. In my youth I followed in Botvinnik's footsteps in the opening. In 1964, the Sämisch Variation was already a familiar weapon of mine. More than two decades later I was given a surprise in Zagreb/Rijeka 1985, where Sax immediately played 6...c5 against me, which was precisely the move that White wanted to prevent in this line!

But it was not a total surprise. The model game was Karpov-Barle, Portoroz 1975, in which White, after 7.dxc5 dxc5 8.♕xd8 ♖xd8 9.♗xc5 ♘c6 10.♘d5



10...♘xd5 11.cxd5 ♗xb2 12.♖b1 ♗c3+ 13.♔f2, had a large advantage. In the Exchange Variation of the Grünfeld Indian you can only dream of such a position. But Sax played 10...♘d7!, and after 11.♘xe7+ ♘xe7 12.♗xe7 ♗xb2! 13.♖b1 ♗c3+ 14.♔f2 ♗d4+!



I had no good squares for the king, so Black had sufficient compensation for the pawn.

Sax's play was not new. Chekhov had already played these moves in 1975, and there were another few games that Sax knew and I didn't. There were no databases then. It was after my game against Sax that Black's cheeky pawn sacrifice really took off. There were numerous attempts to find an advantage for White, but Black's resources were not to be underestimated.

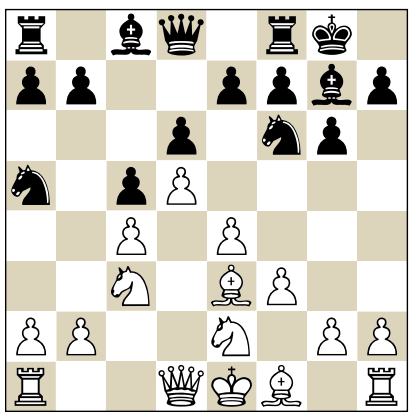
In this regard it was interesting to see that Svidler had prepared thoroughly with this variation in mind for the Candidates' tournament in London. With the white pieces, Svidler was generally the best prepared player in London. Kramnik, too, was armed to the teeth theoretically, but his aim was to create slight strategic pluses, so that he could play for a win without running any risks. Svidler has a broader repertoire and he gave his opponents a clean fight. He almost managed to refute the pawn sacrifice 6...c5, but in the end it turned out that the familiar phrase 'to be continued' still applied.

Peter Svidler joins commentator Lawrence Trent after his win over Levon Aronian in Round 11. From his last four games the Russian collected 3½ points.

In Round 3, the game Svidler-Radjabov went as follows:

KI 48.12 – E81
Peter Svidler
Teimour Radjabov
London 2013 (3)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.♗e3 c5 7.♘ge2 ♘c6 8.d5 ♘a5



This knight sortie to the edge has been played with reasonable success of late, e.g. by Grischuk. Yet it doesn't look good. As a rule you can say that in the Yugoslav Variation the knight sortie is justified, because the white king's bishop has been fianchettoed, so that the white c-pawn is without its natural cover. Otherwise the black knight will soon find itself stranded. This is why the line 1.c4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 g6 4.e3 ♗g7 5.d4 d6 6.d5 ♘a5 has a well-deserved bad reputation.

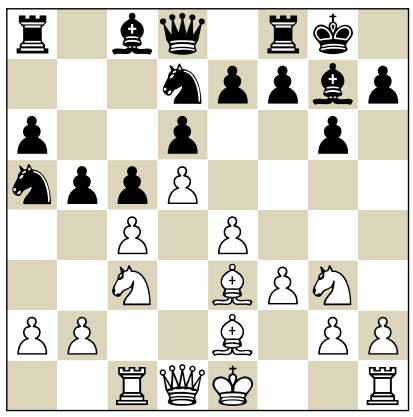
9.♘g3

Dreev and Vitiugov both played 9.♘c1 here against Grischuk, but that doesn't look like a successful knight jump either. The white knight is hardly better placed on c1 than its black counterpart on a5. Svidler shows that square c1 must be reserved for the rook.

9...a6 10.♗e2 ♘d7 11.♖c1

Intending to meet 11...♘e5 with 12.b3.

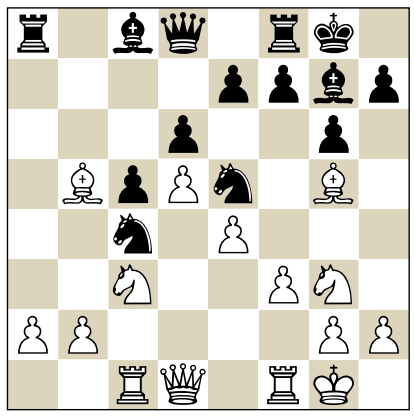
11...b5



Black turns it into a Benko Gambit, but the coordination of his pieces is too poor for this plan to be successful.

12.cxb5 axb5 13.♗xb5 ♘e5 14.0-0 ♘ac4 15.♗g5

Afterwards, Svidler observed that he had prepared this move as well. His conclusion was that White has a large advantage.



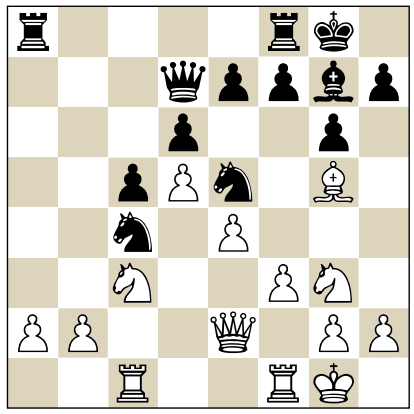
15...♗d7

Radjabov used oceans of time in this stage of the game, and later complained that he had forgotten his preparation. I don't really understand this. These kinds of positions are all about strategic planning and manoeuvring. How can you have forgotten those at the board?

It is difficult enough, incidentally, to suggest a decent alternative. A slightly better option seems 15...h6, intending to force the bishop to go to f4. Play could then continue as follows: 16.♗f4 ♗d7 17.♗xd7 ♕xd7 18.♕e2 ♕b7 19.♗xe5 ♘xe5 20.f4 ♘d7, and now White has the thematic pawn sacrifice 21.e5 dxe5 22.f5.

The computer regards the position as equal, but I can't imagine that a black player would go for it voluntarily.

16.♗xd7 ♕xd7 17.♕e2



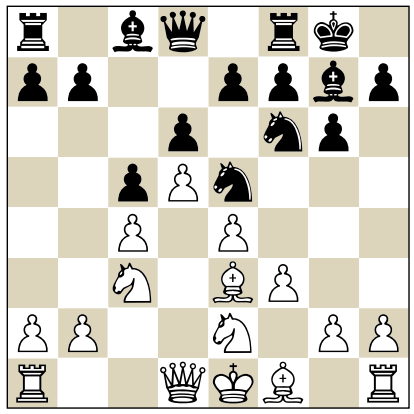
Jan Timman

17...♘xb2
Desperation. After 17...h6 18.♗h4! g5 19.f4 gxh4 20.♘f5 Black would be overrun.
18.♕xb2 ♘d3 19.♕d2 ♘xc1 20.♖xc1 ♗xc3 21.♖xc3 ♖fb8 22.♕c2 f6 23.♗c1 ♕a4 24.a3 ♔f7 25.♘f1 ♕xc2 26.♖xc2 f5 27.♘d2 ♖a4 28.♘c4 fxe4 29. fxe4 ♖b3 30.♔f2 ♔e8 31.e5 ♖a6 32.exd6 exd6 33.♔e2 ♔d7 34. ♗f4 h5 35.h4 ♖a4 36.♔d2 ♖b1 37.♔c3 ♖a6 38.♖e2 ♖d1 39. ♖e6 ♖xd5 40.♖xg6 ♖d4 41.♗xd6 ♖xh4 42.♘e5+ ♔c8 43.♖g8+ ♔b7 44.♗xc5 ♖e6 45.♖g7+ ♔c8 46.♘c4 ♖g4 47.♘d6+ ♔b8 48. ♖b7+ ♔a8 49.♖d7 ♖g8 50.♘c4 ♖xg2 51.♗d6 ♖xd6 52.♘xd6 h4 53.♖h7 ♖h2 54.♔b4 h3 55.♔a5
Black resigned.

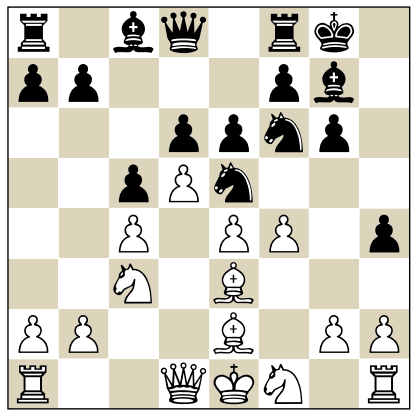
In Round 9, Svidler had a harder time of it in this variation.
Svidler-Grischuk went as follows:

KI 48.12 – E81
Peter Svidler
Alexander Grischuk
London 2013 (9)

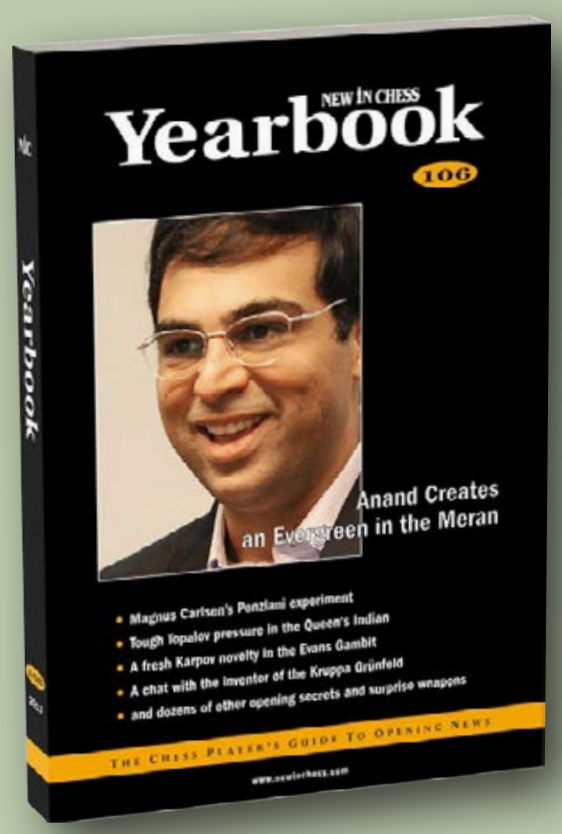
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4. e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.♗e3 c5 7.♘ge2 ♘c6 8.d5 ♘e5



Not to the edge this time. The text is the critical continuation.
9.♘g3 h5 10.♗e2 h4 11.♘f1 e6 12.f4
An extremely sharp move, which will lead to great complications. Remarkably enough, the advance with the f-pawn had already been played successfully in 1997, but has only recently become the centre of attention.



12...♘xc4
An amazing piece sacrifice, which had been played before in a slightly different version. Alternatives were:
A) 12...♘eg4 (the most obvious sortie, but it leaves White with a large advantage) 13.♗xg4 ♘xg4 14.♕xg4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- What can Black do against 8.♕b3 and 9.♗c4 in the Symmetrical English?
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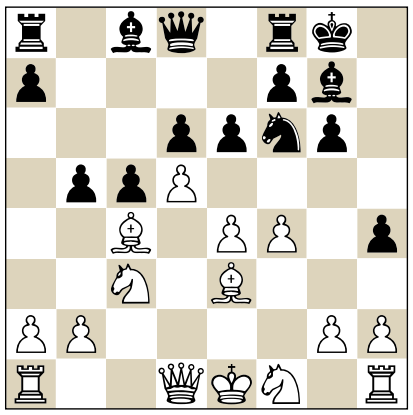
exd5 15.f5 d4 16.♘d5 gxf5 17.exf5 ♖e8 18.0-0-0, with an overwhelming position in Ward-Ye Jiangchuan, London 1997.

B) 12...h3 (an interesting intermediate move) 13.gxh3 ♘xc4! 14.♗xc4 b5 15.♗xb5 exd5 16.exd5 ♖b8 17.♕e2 ♗xh3 18.♖g1 ♗g4! 19.♕c2 ♗f5, and Black has dangerous attacking chances in return for the piece; Sriram-Adhiban, Aurangabad ch-IND 2011. White's play may be open to improvement. 17.♕d2 would be a solid alternative.

13.♗xc4 b5



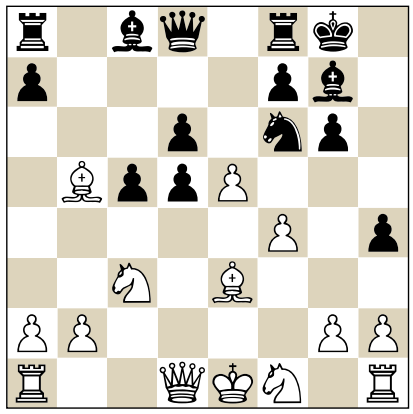
The same consequence as before. The pawn sacrifice opens the position even further, while White loses some of his control of d5.

It is interesting to note that this is all old analysis of Kasparov. He wrote on Crestbook: 'I have analysed the knight sacrifice on c4 in the King's Indian in the 90s. Black is even better there. Then I showed that sacrifice to Nakamura but he did not have a chance to play it.'

I believe it is an exaggeration to state that Black is better after the sacrifice. Sure, the position is dangerous for White, but there are many possibilities to return the piece under favourable circumstances.

14.♗xb5 exd5 15.e5

Grischuk later said that he had not expected this advance, and had therefore not prepared for it. This seems somewhat strange. The computer assesses the text as roughly equal to the obvious 15.exd5, and in practice the text is to be preferred, since it leaves the situation in the centre unclear and forces Black to make difficult decisions.



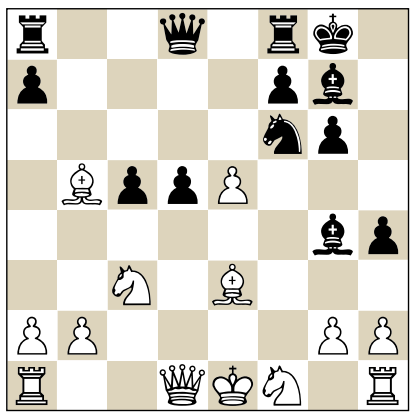
15...dxe5

If Black wants to take his bishop to g4, the immediate 15...♗g4 would have been more accurate. White's best reply then is probably 16.♕a4. The position is extremely complicated.

> 'It is interesting to note that this is all old analysis of Kasparov.'

16.fxe5 ♗g4

Alternatives were 16...h3 and 16...d4. After the text White gets a chance to make an interesting queen sacrifice.

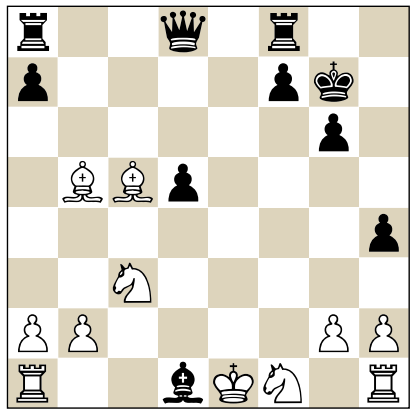


17.exf6!

White gets three minor pieces for the queen, but the important thing is that he takes over the initiative.

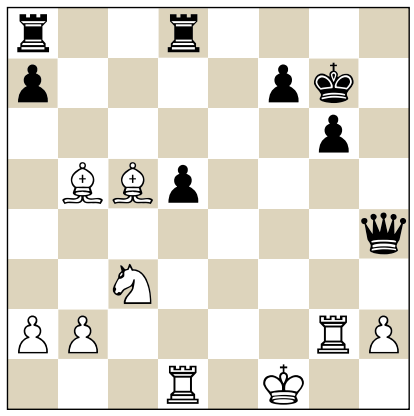
17...♗xd1 18.fxg7 ♔xg7 19.♗xc5

Svidler thought that he was winning here, but Black has a resource.



19...h3! Adhiban's intermediate move. If White moves his g-pawn, Black will have square f3 for his bishop.

20.♖xd1 hxg2 21.♖g1 gxf1♕+ 22.♔xf1 ♕h4 23.♖g2 ♖fd8

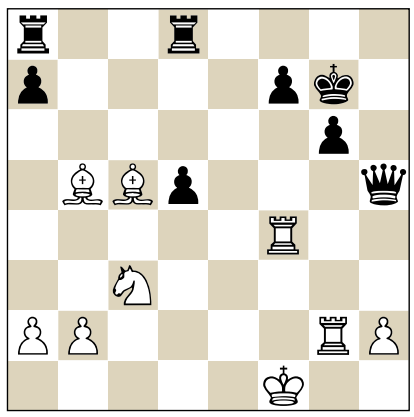


24.♖d4

Too ambitious. White wants to take his rook to the kingside before occupying the central square d4 with his bishop. But Black will succeed in thwarting this plan.

With 24.♗d4+ White could have stabilized the situation in the centre, leaving him with a lasting plus.

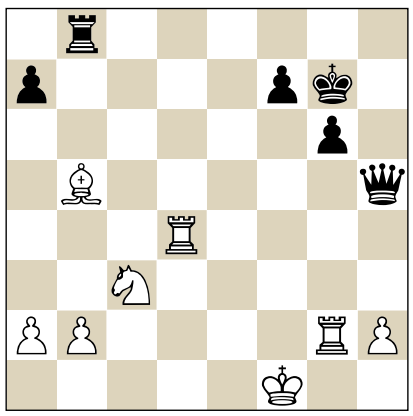
24...♕h5 25.♖f4



25...d4!

Jan Timman

Very well spotted. Black sacrifices an exchange and a pawn in order to deploy his major pieces optimally.
26.♗xd4+ ♖xd4 27.♖xd4 ♖b8

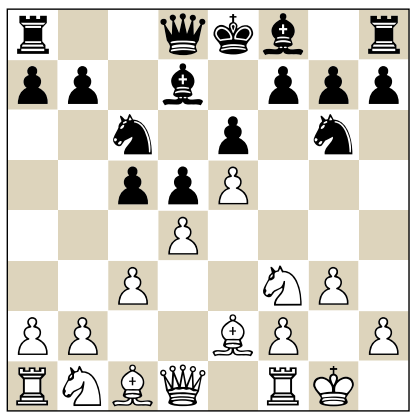


28.a4 a6
The position is dynamically balanced. After all kinds of further adventures the players eventually agreed to divide the spoils. We will definitely see more of this line in the future.
29.♗xa6? White should have played 29.♗e2. **29...♕f3+?** Winning was 29...♕e5. **30.♖f2 ♕h1+ 31.♔e2 ♖xb2+ 32.♖d2 ♕c1 33.♔d3 ♖b6 34.♗c4 ♖d6+ 35.♗d5 ♖d7 36.♖f4 f5 37.♖d4 ♔h6 38.h4 ♖c7 39.♗c4 ♕f1+ 40.♖e2 f4 41.♔c2 f3** Draw.

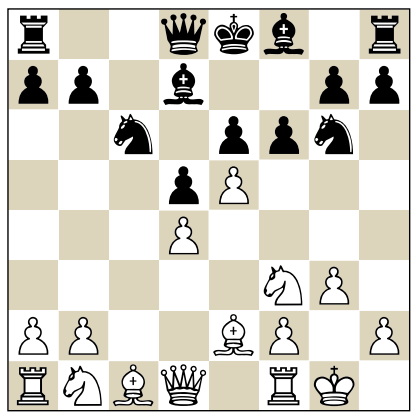
In the penultimate round, Svidler had white against Ivanchuk. If he opened 1.d4, there was no knowing which opening system to expect. Against 1. e4, Ivanchuk had twice played the Sicilian. Svidler did not mind going for this, but it turned out to be the French Defence.

FR 3.3 – C02
Peter Svidler
Vassily Ivanchuk
London 2013 (13)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♗d7 6.♗e2 ♘ge7 7.0-0 ♘g6
Kortchnoi also used to be fond of this knight move, yet it does not guarantee an easy game. I regard the alternative 7...♘f5 as more solid.
8.g3
This is Black's problem. White is going to advance his h-pawn to cause trouble for the black knight.



8...cxd4
The start of a radical attempt to solve Black's opening problems. The critical continuation is 8...♗e7 9.h4 0-0 10.h5 ♘h8. The black knight seems to be badly positioned, but White will not be able to prevent it being redeployed via f7. In Grischuk-Ivanchuk, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011, play continued as follows: 11.dxc5 ♗xc5 12.b4 ♗e7 13.b5 ♘a5 14.h6, and now Black took the emergency measure 14...f5, after which White swapped on g7 and was better. But there was nothing against 14...g6, followed by 15...f6. I have a feeling that Svidler wanted to play differently.
In Amsterdam 1999 I played 12.c4 (instead of 12.b4) against Ljubojevic, and ended up with a better position. It makes sense to open the centre at once in order to exploit the offside position of the black knight.
9.cxd4 f6 This was his intention. He wants immediate clarity in the centre.



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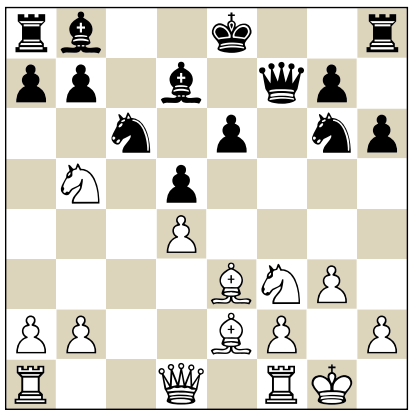
> ‘If I don’t play this I will kind of regret it forever’, Svidler said afterwards.

10.exf6 ♕xf6 11.♗g5 ♕f7 12.♗e3 h6 13.♘c3 ♗d6 14.♘b5 ♗b8

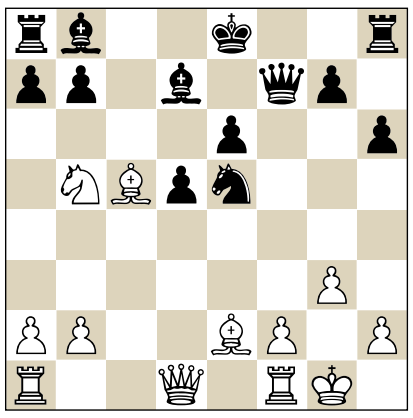


15.♘e5!

‘If I don’t play this I will kind of regret it forever’, Svidler said afterwards, and this is indeed the principled continuation. Other moves would allow Black to complete his development with relative ease, as practice has shown.

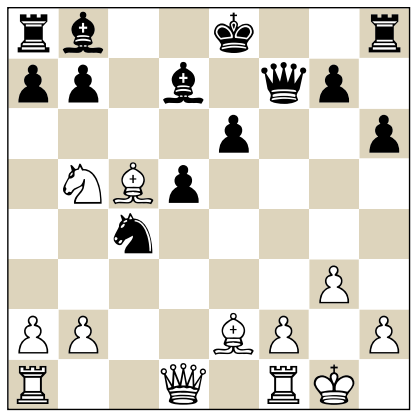
15...♘gxe5 16.dxe5 ♘xe5 17.♗c5

The point of the pawn sac. Black cannot castle and will also find it difficult to mobilize his forces.



17...♘c4!

After a long think Ivanchuk finds a well thought-out way to establish an acceptable position. He wants to chase the white queen’s bishop from the a3-f8 diagonal at all cost.

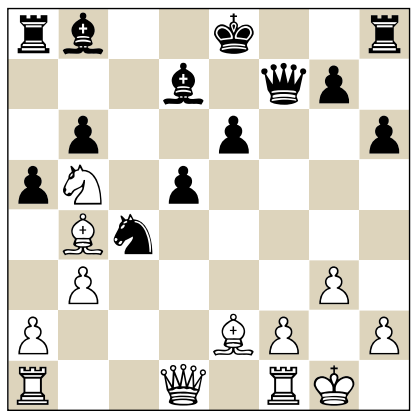


18.b3

White’s best move was 18.♖e1!, but this would have been extremely hard to calculate over the board. The spectacular main line goes as follows: 18.♖e1 ♗xb5 19.♕xd5 e5! 20.♗h5! g6 21.♗xg6 ♕xg6 22.♕xb7 (threatening mate) 22...♗d7! 23.♕xa8 ♔f7 24.♕f3+ ♕f5, and after the queen swap White will retain some advantage.

After the text the position is objectively equal, but this was even harder to see at this point.

18...b6 19.♗b4 a5

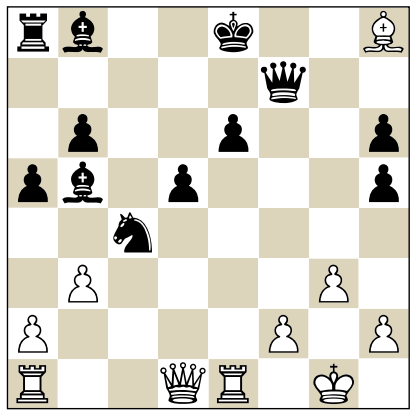


20.♗c3!

The point of White’s play. The bishop is put on the long diagonal with the aim of capturing the rook on h8.

20...♗xb5 21.♗h5 g6 22.♗xh8 gxh5 23.♖e1

After 23.bxc4 ♗xc4 24.♖e1 ♗d6 Black would have an easy game, which is why White first attacks the pawn.

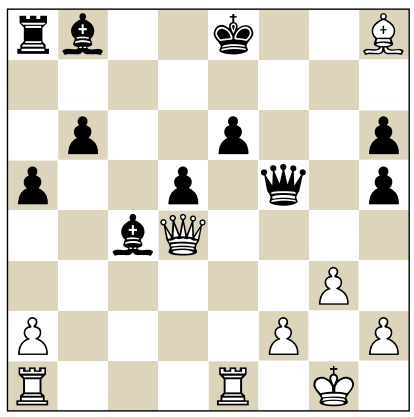


23...♕f5

Ivanchuk was very short of time here, so it is not so strange that he failed to find the hidden resource in the position.

After 23...♘d6! 24.♕xd5 ♔d7! 25.♕xa8 ♗c6 26.♕xb8 ♕f3 27.♕a7+ ♘b7! 28.♖ad1+ ♔e7 White has nothing better than 29.♔f1, which will be met by 29...♗b5+. White can still try 30.♖d3 then, but after 30...♗xd3+ 31.♔g1 ♗f5! there is no longer a win for White.

24.bxc4 ♗xc4 25.♕d4

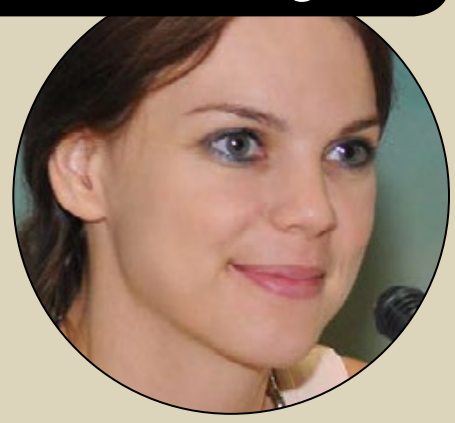


Now White has everything under control, and Svidler comfortably chased his opponent through the flag.

25...♗c7 26.♗e5 0-0-0 27.♖ac1 ♖d7 28.a4 ♕g4 29.♕e3 h4 30.♕xh6 hxg3 31.hxg3 ♗d8 32.♗f4 ♖e7 33.♗g5 ♔d7 34.♗xe7 ♗xe7 35.♔g2 ♗c5 36.f3 ♕f5 37.♕g7+

Black overstepped the time-limit. ■

Anastasia Karlovich



CURRENT ELO: 2230
DATE OF BIRTH: Dnepropetrovsk, USSR
PLACE OF BIRTH: 29 May,1982
PLACE OF RESIDENCE: Kharkov, Ukraine

What is your favourite colour?
Black and white.

What food makes you happy?
Ukrainian borscht, Italian and Greek cuisine.

And what drink?
Calvados.

Who is your favourite author?
Erich Maria Remarque, Milan Kundera, Sergey Dovlatov.

What is your all-time favourite movie?
The Unbearable Lightness of Being.

What is your favourite TV series?
Jeeves and Wooster, *Black Books*.

Do you have a favourite actor?
Sean Penn, Stephen Fry (such a pity he was busy filming and could not attend the closing ceremony of the Candidates').

And a favourite actress?
Juliette Binoche.

Do you have a favourite painter?
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Sergey Goschmer.

What music do you like to listen to?
Mostly rock and jazz.

What was your best result ever?
First place in the Ukrainian Championship U-18. Such tournaments were constant life-and-death struggles.

What was the best game you ever played?
I like to sacrifice pieces. In the game Karlovich-Hryhorenko (2001) my opponent let me fulfil my dreams ☺.

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?
Mikhail Tal. Both his games and his life leave no one indifferent.

Is there a chess book that had a profound influence on you?
Yuri Averbakh's *Rook Endings* – torture for the woman's brain ☺.

What was the most exciting chess game you ever saw?
Carlsen-Svidler and Ivanchuk-Kramnik, 14th round of the 2013 FIDE Candidates' tournament.

What is the best chess country in the world?
I was impressed by Indonesia – people were happily playing chess on the streets all around, unrated players know theory so well that they make experienced players jealous, and media attention for chess events is higher than in our 'chess' countries.

What are chess players particularly good at (except for chess)?
At business! There are many who stopped playing chess in time and became quite successful businessmen.

Do chess players have typical shortcomings?
A damaged nervous system.

Do you have any superstitions?
I'd spend all my money to find a lucky pen. That's why I cannot afford to play chess too often ☺.

Who or what would you like to be if you weren't yourself?
A photographer in the '60s.

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?
Stephen Fry, Jim Morrison, Helmut Newton.

Is there something you would love to learn?
To fly.

What is your greatest fear?
That my small fears destroy my personality ☺.

How do you relax?
I lie on my couch and read *The Little Book of Calm* ☺!

What is the stupidest rule in chess?
As a player I don't like the 'zero tolerance rule', but I appreciate it as a photographer.

What will be the nationality of the 2050 chess world champion?
Estonian.

Is a knowledge of chess useful in everyday life?
Hard to answer, as I've never tried to live without chess knowledge ☺.

What is the best piece of advice you were ever given?
Don't pay too much attention to what people think about you.

What is the best thing that was ever said about chess?
'Chess is imagination' – David Bronstein.

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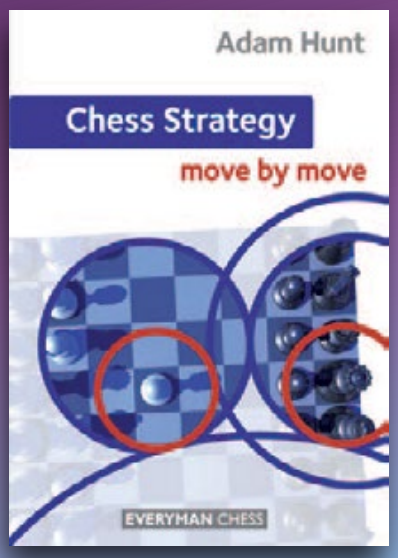

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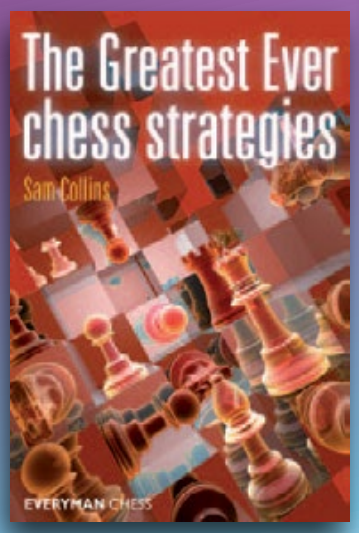

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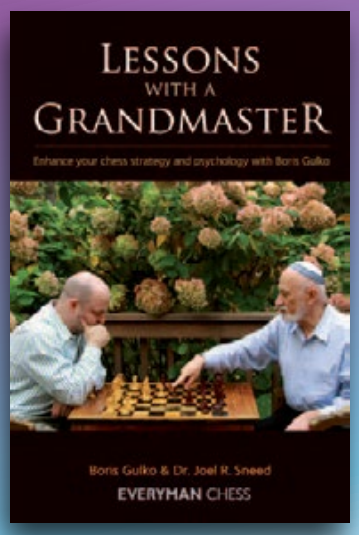
—Paul Kane, Manchester Chess Federation



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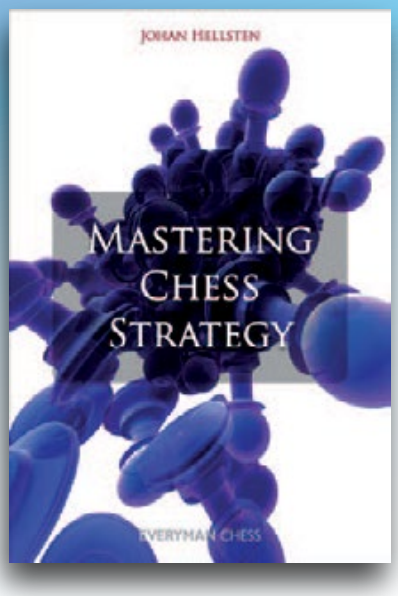

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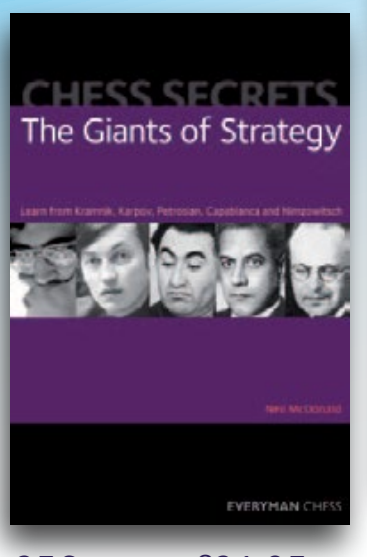

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the chess reading public deserves such a valuable book.
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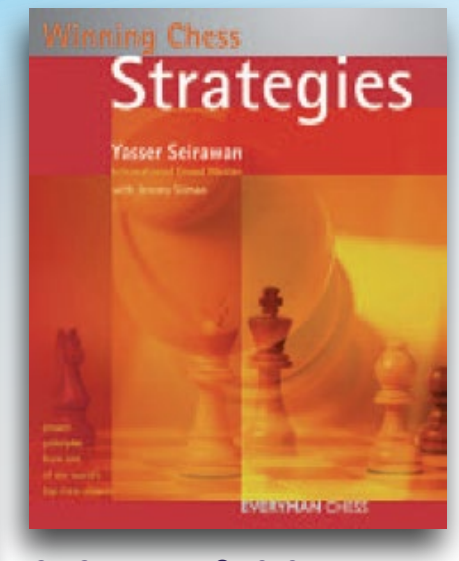

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